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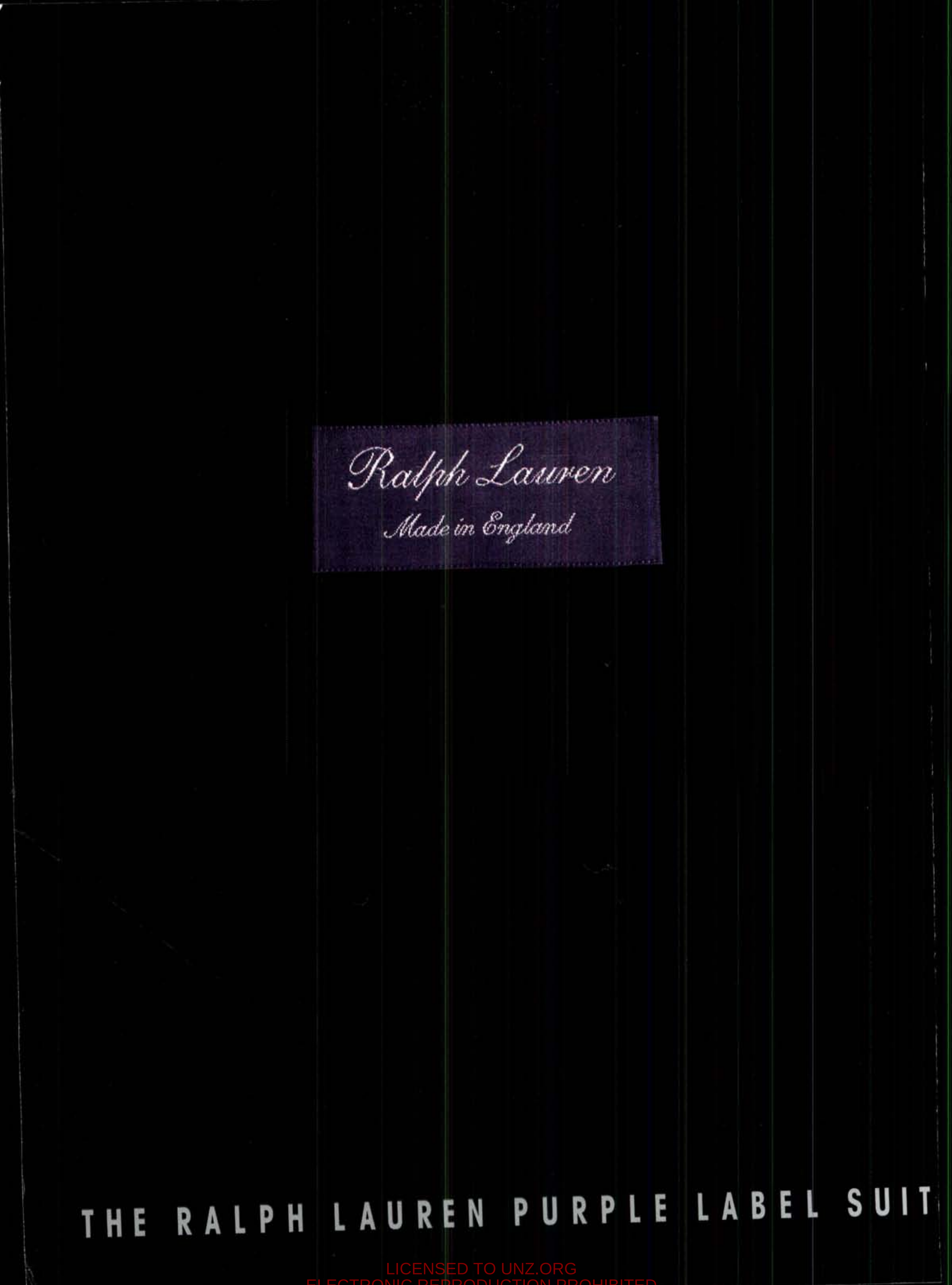
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THE NEW YORKER

MARCH 11, 1996

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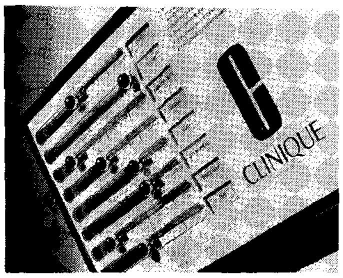

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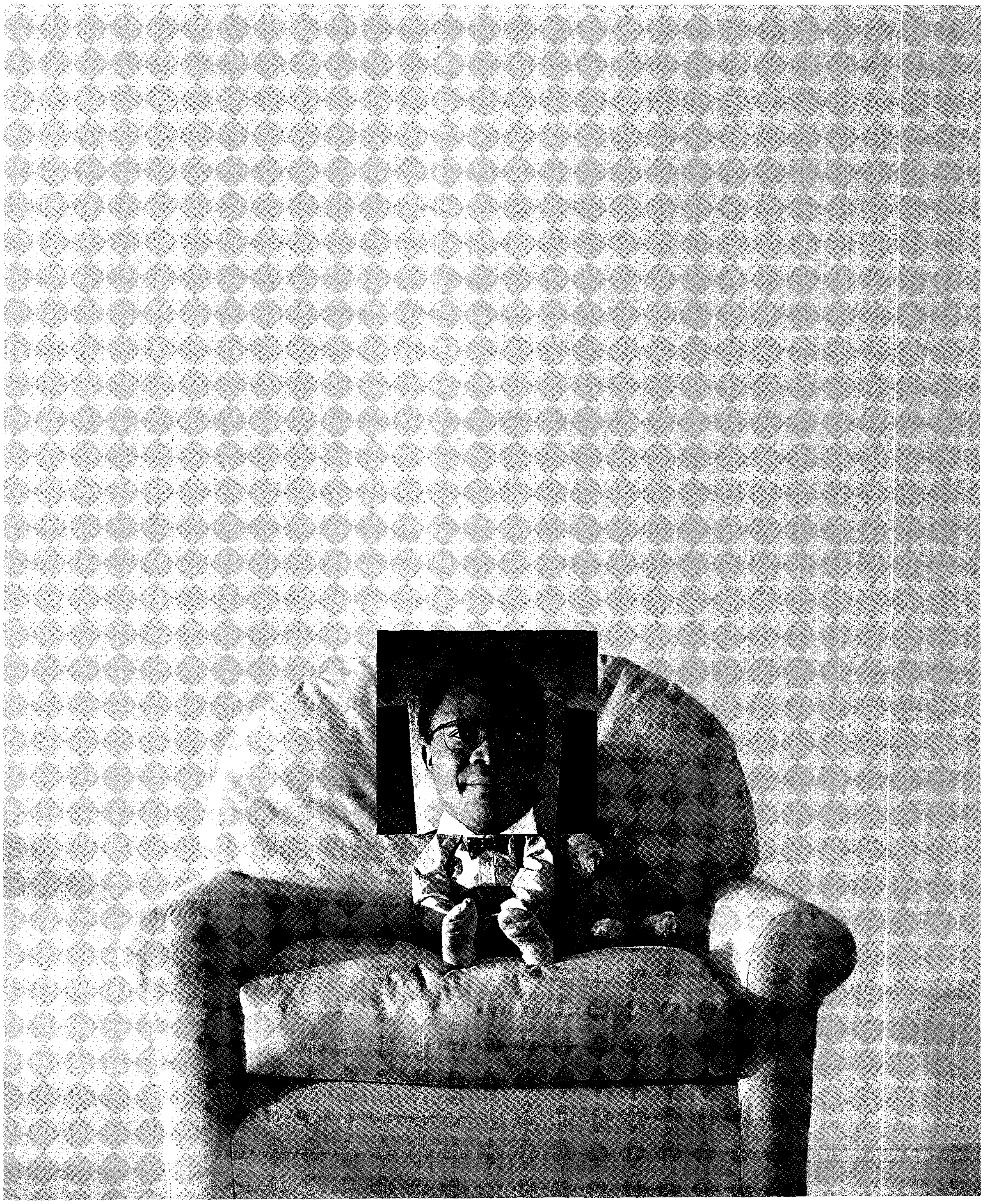

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COMMENT

MUTUALLY ASSURED STUPIDITY

Washington's Cuba policy is made in Miami.

"FRANKLY," Madeleine K. Albright, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, said Tuesday, "this is not *cojones*. This is cowardice." The Ambassador was alluding to a Cuban military pilot's exultant cry after he shot down a light plane that was alleged to be invading Cuban airspace. "We took out his balls!" the pilot had shouted. "Congratulations!" came the reply from Ground Control. The Cuban MIG had just blasted the first of two Miami-based Cessnas out of the skies over the Florida straits, and the latest in a long series of diplomatic tiffs was under way.

In the aftermath, as the charges and countercharges flew back and forth, it was hard to tell where *cojones* ended and cowardice began. Even the copy desk at the *Times* seemed torn: it settled on what some would call a cowardly compromise, coyly replacing *cojones* with "[expletive]" when quoting the Cuban pilot but summoning enough testicular fortitude to use the *c*-word when quoting the Ambassador, who had earlier displayed her own metaphorically clanking [expletive] in haranguing the Security Council about its obligation to share Washington's indignation over this latest Cuban outrage. Despite her best efforts, though, the council refused to condemn the Cuban action, let alone impose sanctions. The most it could manage was a distinctly testosterone-deficient statement "deploring" the downing of the Cessnas. The United States, the Ambassador said gamely, was "delighted" with this statement. Maybe so. More likely, though, Ms. Albright was putting a good face on an embarrassing irony: after thirty-five years of embargoes and hostility, it is Washington, not Havana, that is isolated on the overall issue of Cuba. As recently as October of 1994, for example, the General Assembly voted, 101–2 (the second "no" vote was Israel's), not merely to deplore but actually to condemn the American embargo.

This time, Washington found itself stumbling over the same piece of international law that Cuba had so brutally violated: the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, which prohibits countries from shooting down civilian aircraft under any circumstances whatsoever. The Chicago Convention also enjoins governments to endeavor to keep airplanes under their jurisdiction from encroaching on the airspace of its neighbors, and here there can be no doubt that the United States has been grossly negligent. Brothers to the Rescue, the organization of pilots responsible for the Cessna flights, has deliberately violated Cuban airspace many times, as part of

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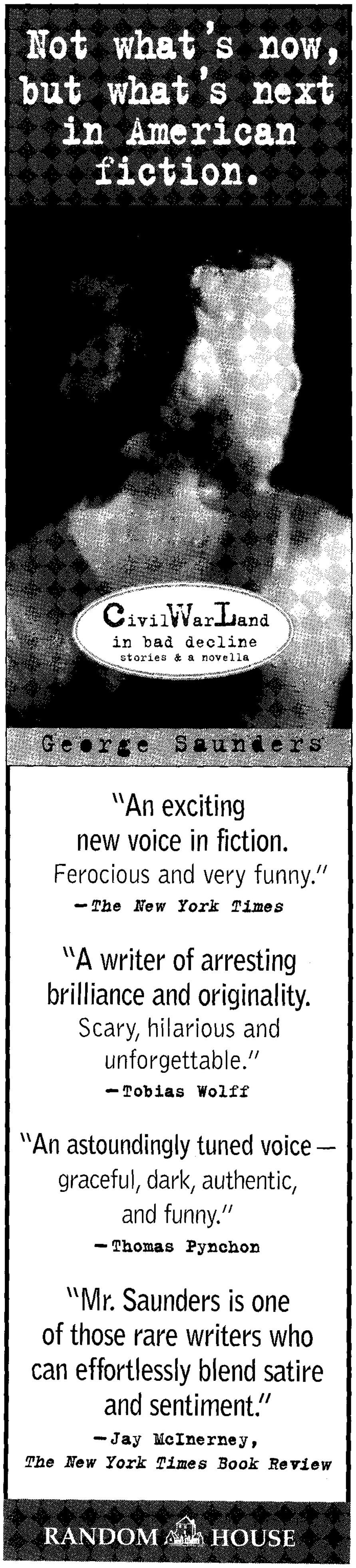

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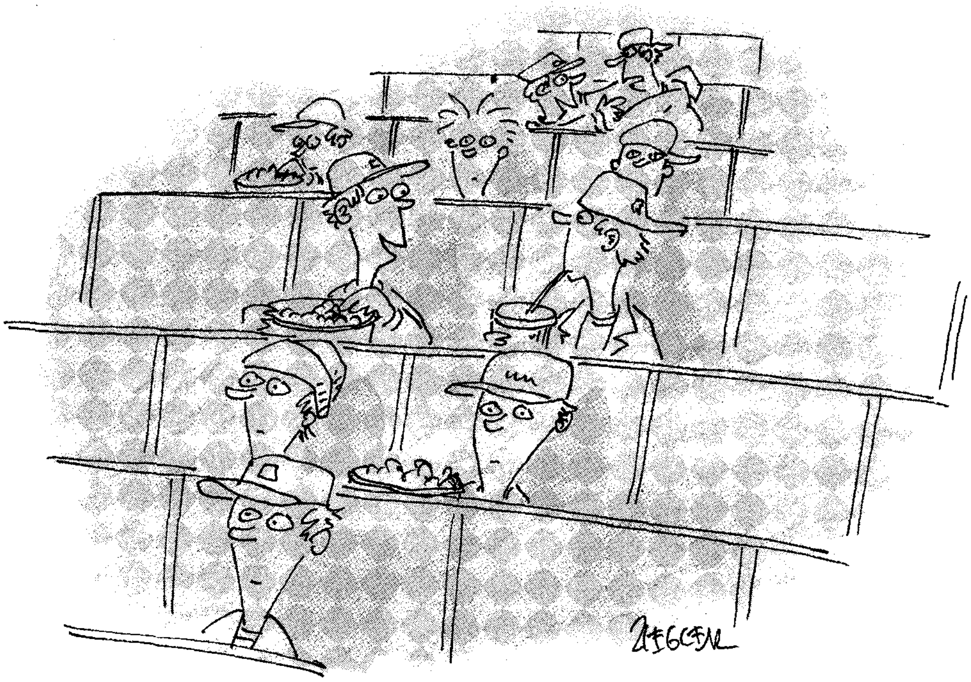


"Jackie Chan is great, but John Woo is God."

• •

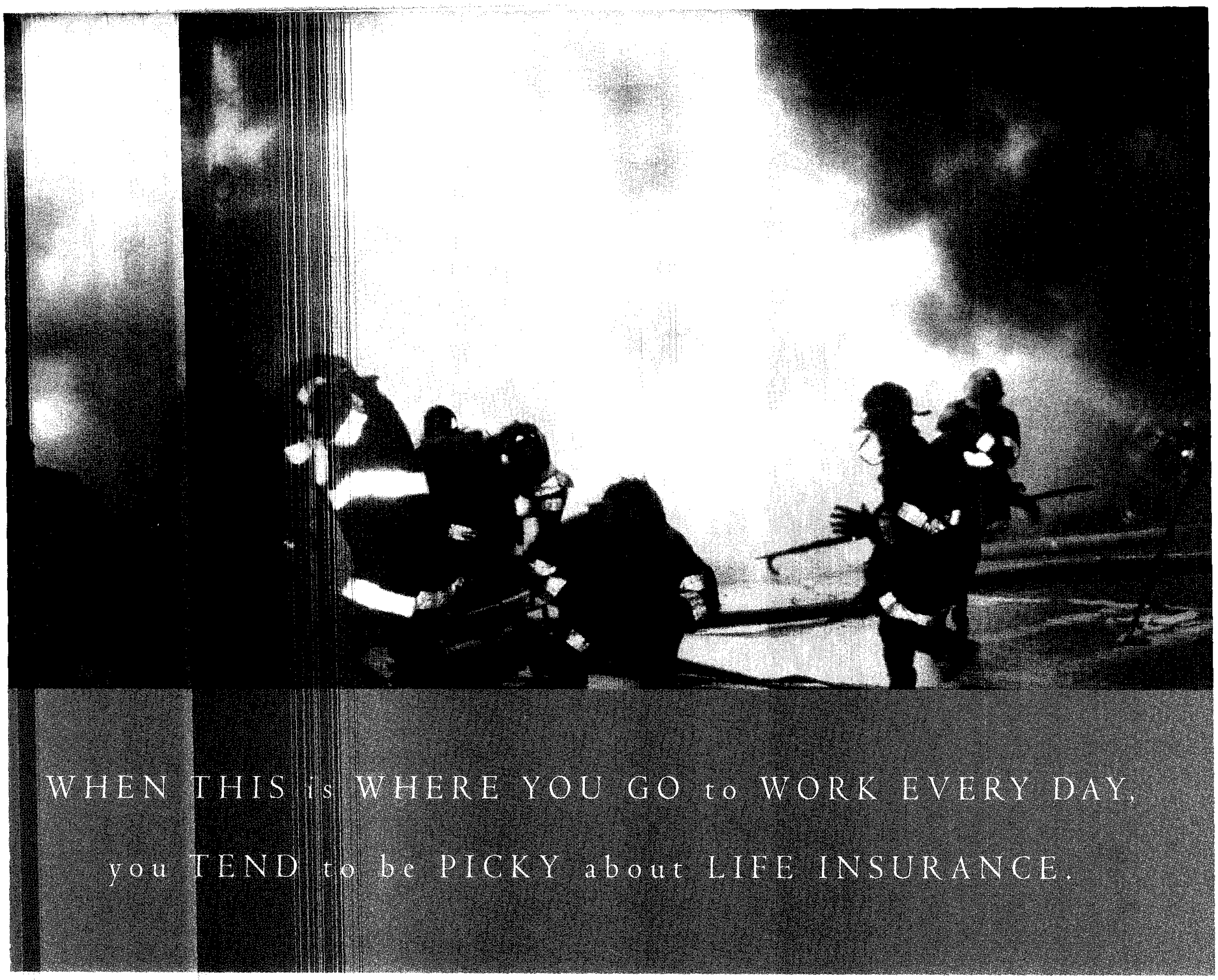
what it considers a nonviolent campaign aimed at bringing down the Cuban government. Last July and again this January, Brothers to the Rescue illegally entered Cuban airspace, flying over Havana both times. American officials had abundant evidence that more such forays were planned and that Cuba would react strongly. But they did not intervene, and this omission fatally undermined Ms. Albright's position before the Security Council.

The American failure to apply the Chicago Convention to Brothers to the Rescue is part of a broader failure, going back decades, to enforce American law against Cuban-exile groups operating from American territory. Cuban-exile groups have been responsible over the years for numerous acts of terrorism in and around Cuba, including the strafing of a Varadero beach hotel from a speedboat in 1992. Cuban-Americans who dissent from the hard line are routinely threatened, and some have been killed. In 1990, the Cuban Museum of Arts and Culture in Miami was bombed for daring to exhibit the works of artists considered by the hard-liners to be sympathetic to Castro. Worse, the United States government, besides failing to force the violent, irrational, and antidemocratic fringe of the Cuban-exile community to abide by American law, lets hard-line Cuban exiles exercise what amounts to a veto over its policy toward Cuba. As a result, the United States has never developed a policy based on its real interests. These are not difficult to discern. Ten million Cubans still live on the island; the United States would like them to stay there. For political, moral, and economic reasons, the United States would like to see the end of the Castro regime, but, for the same reasons, a prolonged period of violence and instability would be disastrous. A Cuban civil war—a live possibility, given the immense quantities of arms on the island and in Florida—would inevitably involve American citizens of Cuban origin, would set off tsunamis of immigration, and would create a situation in which American intervention would be difficult to avoid.

Logic suggests that there might be some connection between the fact that the Castro regime is the only Communist dictatorship left in the whole of the Western world, on the one hand, and the American policy of nuance-free hostility toward that regime, on the other. The Cuban Communist Party long ago gave up hope of persuading the masses that its rule is justified by the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat or the creation of a New Socialist Man. It's clear to even a casual visitor to the island that the American embargo has become a major source of legitimacy for the regime. Reason suggests that the policy the United States pursued with such stunning success toward the former Soviet bloc—a combination of military containment, normal diplomatic relations, trade and tourism, cultural exchanges, encouragement of internal reforms, and political and logistical support for internal dissidents—ought to be given a try.

Logic and reason have their place, but that place apparently begins somewhere north of Pompano Beach and west of Arlington. Cuba's cretinism in shooting down the planes is now to be supplemented by an extra helping of mindlessness from Washington. The Clinton Administration has already cancelled charter flights from Miami, a step that will slightly reduce the flow of dollars into the Cuban economy, at the cost of making it harder for Cuban-Americans to visit their relatives back home. Now President Clinton has agreed to sign the so-called Helms-Burton bill—a piece of legislation that will cement the embargo into law, and deprive the President of the option of modulating it for diplomatic purposes. It will also permit lawsuits in American courts against Canadian, Mexican, European, and other foreign companies whose Cuban investments involve the use of expropriated property—a category broad enough to include virtually every activity in Cuba. Moreover, the officers of these companies will be ineligible for American visas. The European Union, Canada, and Mexico may be expected to challenge these provisions as violations of international trade agreements. Imagine, if you please, what Pat Buchanan could do with that one.

Fidel Castro has survived the enmity of nine American Presidents. In concert with his enemies in south Florida, he retains a hypnotic ability to induce stupidity in Yankee policymakers. That seems unlikely to change until the United States government gets around to taking control of its Cuba policy away from a small, self-interested lobby group. But that would require, as Ambassador Albright might say, *cojones*. And, despite Washington's decades of macho posturing toward Havana, its *cojones* have never been conspicuous in its approach to Miami. —WALTER RUSSELL MEAD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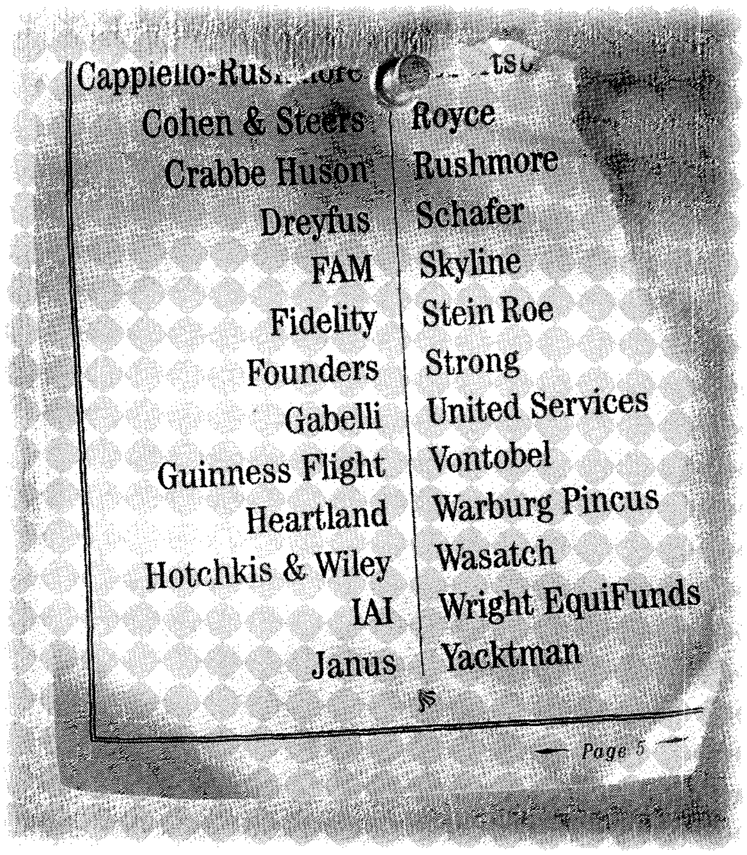

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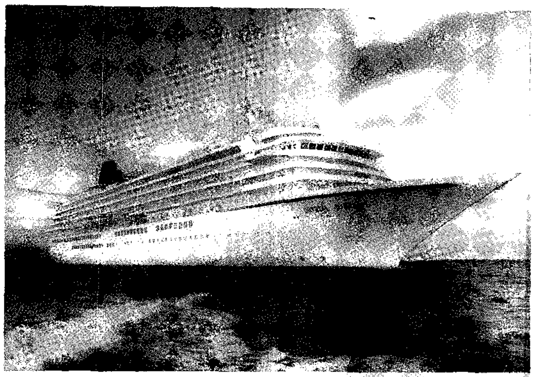

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IN THE MAIL

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Robert Wright, in his discussion of the capture of the computer criminal Kevin Mitnick ("Hackwork," January 29th), contrasts Mitnick as evil genius, which is how he is portrayed in Tsutomu Shimomura and John Markoff's book, with the far more benign view presented in Jonathan Littman's book. As a veteran prosecutor of economic and technology crimes and as a computer user, I am less concerned by the money a person like Mitnick might steal from hacking than by the gross invasions of privacy he engages in. To argue that Mitnick is no worse than many other hackers because he didn't hack for money ignores the far greater harm.

IVAN ORTON
Seattle, Wash.

Malcolm Gladwell's article on the Challenger explosion ("Blowup," January 22nd) doesn't fully examine a dimension of professional ethics. An increased probability of explosion for that launch had been forecast by the engineers in charge of the O-ring development at Morton Thiokol. The explosion therefore was no accident; it was a failure of professional ethics on the part of the management of Morton Thiokol and of NASA. NASA badly needed a launch at that time, and the company needed NASA's good will for contract renewal. Both of them placed those needs ahead of the preservation of life.

Another case of increased possibility of disaster was the flawed joints in the Citicorp Center at the approach of hurricane season ("The Fifty-nine Story Crisis," by Joe Morgenstern, May 29, 1995). In that instance, the actions of the engineers and the management were professional and ethical in the face of great personal and financial risk, and potential loss of life was averted.

RUDOLPH J. MARCUS
Sonoma, Calif.

STILL DEWEY'S SCHOOL

As the director of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, I was bemused to find that *New Yorker* readers may get the impression from Naomi Bliven's review "Dewey Still?" (January 22nd) that the Laboratory Schools "closed down" ninety-three years before its centennial, which we are now celebrating. More than sixty-five hundred alumni, sixteen hundred and twenty-five current students, and two hundred and sixty faculty and staff members offer tangible evidence that the school has thrived since John Dewey's untimely departure.

LUCINDA LEE KATZ
Chicago, Ill.

POSTSCRIPT

EDITORS' NOTE: In "Jury Tampering" (The Talk of the Town, by Warren St. John, February 5th) we reported that the performance artist and prankster Joey Skaggs had masqueraded as Professor Joseph Bonuso of the Solomon Project, which had developed a computer model for jury deliberations. A few aspects of that story need clarification. The *American Lawyer's* coverage of "Professor Bonuso" was not "enthusiastic," as we reported; their article did not reveal that "Professor Bonuso of the Solomon Project" was in fact Mr. Skaggs, but it did question the project's supposed affiliation with N.Y.U. Law School. As for N.Y.U. itself, a member of its public-relations department did raise the possibility of providing help to the project, but no formal offer was made.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Bein' with Behan—Dubliner Michael L. Kavanagh's one-man show about the boisterous Irish playwright Brendan Behan. In previews March 6-9. Opens March 10 at 3. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 279-4200.)

Below the Belt—A new comedy by Richard Dresser, in which three businessmen (Judd Hirsch, Robert Sean Leonard, and Jude Ciccolella) play the corporate game together while based at an industrial compound in a distant land. Directed by Gloria Muzio. In previews. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Brine County Wedding—Christopher V. Alessi portrays six gossiping Alabamans in his comic one-man show. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Call Me Sarah Bernhardt—The latest from Everett Quinton and the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. In previews. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Forbidden Hollywood—Gerard Alessandrini takes aim at the West Coast Babylon in this new musical satire. In previews through March 9. Opens March 10 at 7:30. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

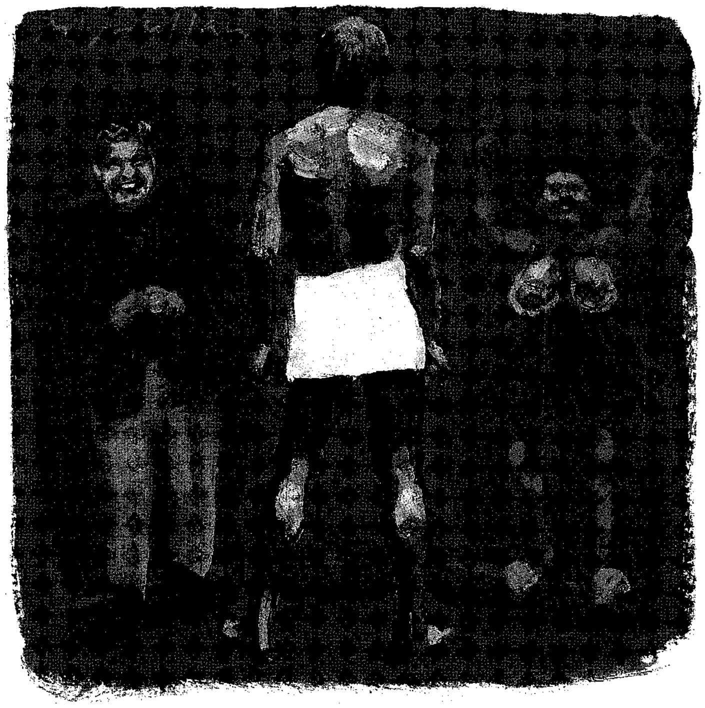
Getting Away With Murder—John Rubinstein, Terrence Mann, and Christine Ebersole star in Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's new comic thriller. And it's not a musical. Directed by Jack O'Brien. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Green Bird—Theatre for a New Audience's production of Carlo Gozzi's fantastic tale, directed by Julie Taymor, with original music by Elliot Goldenthal. For adults and children ages twelve and up. Preview on March 6. Opens March 7 at 7. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Inherit the Wind—George C. Scott and Charles Durning go head to head in a National Actors Theatre revival of the 1955 drama about the Scopes "monkey trial." Directed by John Tillinger. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

The Night of the Iguana—Cherry Jones, Marsha Mason, and William Petersen star in the Roundabout Theatre's revival of Tennessee Williams's 1961 play. Directed by Robert Falls. Previews begin March 6. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Nixon's Nixon—Russell Lees's play, which is set during a secret meeting on the night before the President's resignation, has reopened at an Off Broadway theatre. With Gerry Bamman as Nixon and Steve Mellor as Kissinger. In previews through March 11. Opens March 12 at 7. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 315-2244.)



Brian Murray, Neil Maffin, and Ellen Parker, in "Entertaining Mr. Sloane," at Classic Stage Company.

JAMES McMULLAN

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Sabina—A new drama by Willy Holtzman, based on Aldo Carotenuto's book "A Secret Symmetry," about the relationships between Freud, Jung, and Jung's associate and lover Sabina Spielrein. Previews begin March 6. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

The Size of the World—An eccentric New Jersey family alters a young man's notion of the American Dream, in a new comedy starring Rita Moreno, Frank Whaley, and Louis Zorich. Written by Charles Evered. Previews begin March 6. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria—The Spanish playwright Fernando Arrabal's 1967 comedy, about two men who develop an array of role-playing relationships—mother-child, torturer-victim, master-slave—while stranded on an island. Presented by the Independent Theatre Company. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes March 16.)

Bed and Sofa—A young Moscow wife transfers her affections from her husband to his visiting war buddy in a musical comedy based on the Soviet director Abram Room's celebrated 1926 silent film. G. W. Mercier's chiaroscuro set captures the wit and charm of the movie, but neither Laurence Klavan's intertitle-like libretto nor Andre Ernotte's socialist-realist staging draws out the potential of Polly Pen's playful score. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes March 10.)

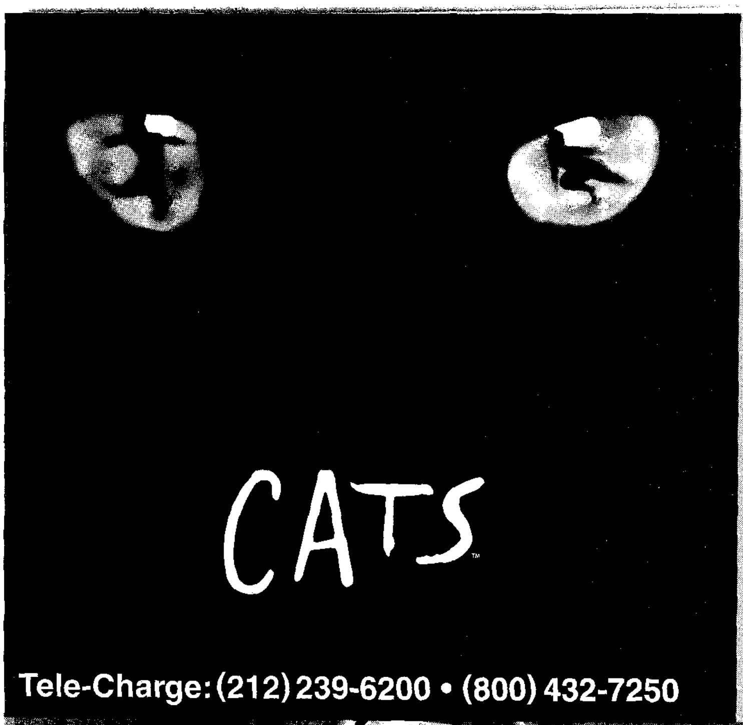
Blue Window—Under Joe Mantello's beautiful direction, Craig Lucas's well-written but slim 1984 play—about a party given by a nervous hostess and attended by six other young New Yorkers—seems almost substantial. David Aaron Baker and Allison Janney stand out in an excellent cast. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 24.)

Bus Stop—Mary-Louise Parker, Ron Perlman, and Billy Crudup lead the cast in a revival of William Inge's 1955 comedy-drama. Directed by Josephine R. Abady. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes March 17.)

Chicago City Limits—The improv company presents "What You Said," a revue featuring its ever-popular five-minute musical. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

Dancing on Her Knees—Nilo Cruz's magic-realist confection takes place in Miami on All Souls' Day. Francine (Luis Antonio Ramos), a feisty drag queen trying to summon back her dead lover, calls up a Punch-and-Judy pair of tango artists (Paul Calderon and Franca Barchiesi) who are trying desperately to escape the land of the dead. Throw in a couple of raunchy angels and a wandering German ghost who repairs umbrellas, and you have a satisfying if somewhat bombastic farce. Ramos is moving as the lovelorn yet tough-as-nails Francine, and, thanks to the talent of Calderon and Barchiesi, the production reaches another level entirely in the shimmering dance numbers. Directed by Graciela Daniele. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes March 17.)

Entertaining Mr. Sloane—The Classic Stage Company's vivid revival of Joe Orton's 1964 black farce is delicious in every way: the set (a queasy gold-and-brown welfare-state living room plopped down in an encroaching black junk pile) and the costumes (where does one find a man's tomato-red suede blazer these days?) are spot on, and the entire cast turns in terrific performances—especially Ellen Parker and Brian Murray, as the brother and sister whose lascivious actions toward their overripe young boarder, Mr. Sloane (Neil Maffin), speak much louder than their virtuous words. Also with George Hall. David Esbjornson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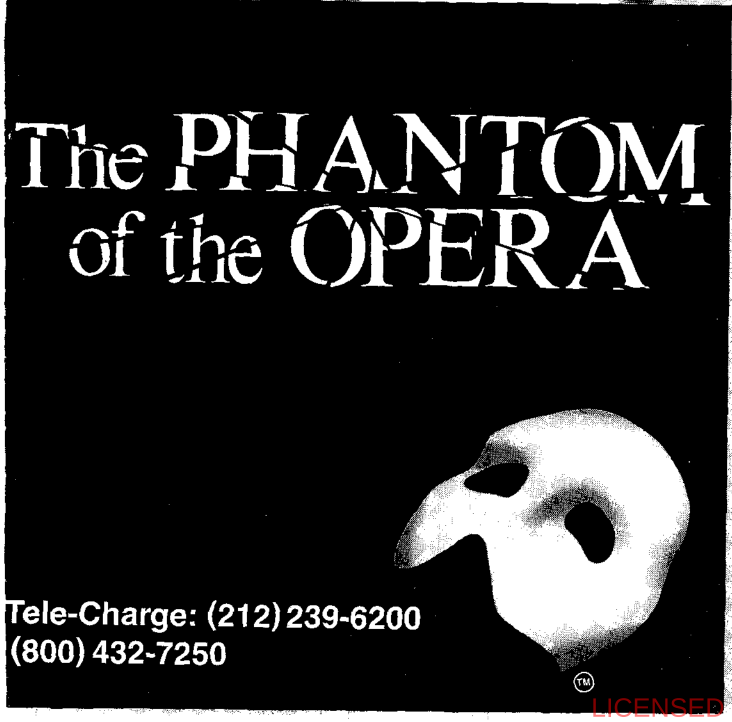
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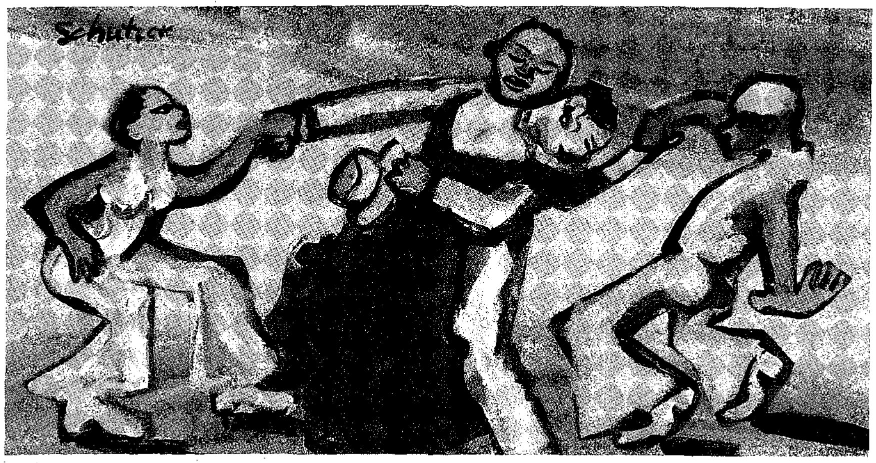
directed. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes March 17.)

A Fair Country—Laurence Luckinbill plays an American diplomat whose family (Judith Ivey, Dan Futterman, and Matt McGrath) disintegrates after he tries to put an end to their long assignment in South Africa, in a new play by Jon Robin Baitz. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Floyd Collins—A new musical by Adam Guettel (score and lyrics) and Tina Landau (book), set in Kentucky in 1925 and based on a true story, about a farmer who is trapped in a cave and becomes the object of a rescue mission that draws national attention. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 24.)



Marianne Filali, Paul Calderon, Franca Barchiesi, and Julio Monge, in "Dancing on Her Knees," at the Public Theatre.

DENA SCHUTZER

Lion in the Streets—The spirit of a nine-year-old murder victim haunts her inner-city neighborhood in Canadian playwright Judith Thompson's latest drama. (29th Street Repertory, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575. Closes March 17.)

Master Class—Zoe Caldwell portrays Maria Callas with steely, divaesque conviction in Terrence McNally's latest play, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/27/95.) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Mrs. Klein—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory in Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Molly Sweeney—Brian Friel's 1994 play owes much to an Oliver Sacks case study, but Friel didn't reimagine the material, and the play, which he directed, comes across as a staged reading of an essay. The three actors—Catherine Byrne, as the blind Molly, Jason Robards, as the doctor who hopes to make her see again, and Alfred Molina, as Molly's foolish, blustery husband—sit or stand and address the audience, and they all end up overexplaining themselves. (1/29/96) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Moon Over Buffalo—Carol Burnett and Philip Bosco are on a brief hiatus from Ken Ludwig's forgettable farce. Lynn Redgrave and Robert Goulet take over until they return, on April 17. Tom Moore directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Overtime—*A comic sequel to "The Merchant of Venice," by A. R. Gurney. The cast includes Nicholas Kepros, Joan McMurtrey, Jere Shea, Rocco Sisto, and Robert Stanton. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)*

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Set in a Paris bar in 1904, Steve Martin's comedy features Einstein and Picasso sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world. It contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Rent—Puccini's "La Bohème" was the inspiration for the late Jonathan Larson's rock opera, which is set in a gray and dishevelled East Village loft space and which stands every assumption of the traditional musical on its head. The characters include a straight H.I.V.-positive couple, a pair of lesbian lovers, a drag queen, a teacher, and a would-be filmmaker; with a combination of gravity and grace, Larson uncovers the poignance in their panic. No through-sung musical could support such narrative overload (eight separate stories are told), yet by the end of the evening, Larson's talent has taken the audience to places where the musical never ventures these days. (2/19/96) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Scenes from an Execution—Playwright Howard Barker's rough-and-tumble portrait of the Venetian artist as lusty middle-aged heroine, in a bare-bones, bare-bums production by the Blue Light Theatre Company and the Potomac Theatre Project. Galactia (Naomi Jacobson) is a sixteenth-century Mapplethorpe commissioned by the state to paint a triumphant naval battle, but she rocks the Renaissance establishment with her flesh-and-blood realism. Barker's intellectual and linguistic rigor is relentless, and the performances—especially by Jacobson as the primal genius, Greg Naughton as her cheek-turning lover, and Alex Draper as the epicurean Doge—are densely textured marvels. The assured direction is by Richard Romagnoli. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes March 17.)

Sleep Deprivation Chamber—The Signature Theatre Company's Adrienne Kennedy season continues with a semiautobiographical drama that she co-wrote with her son Adam, about a family's shattering encounter with the criminal-justice system. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes March 24.)

Spoke Man—A one-man show by John Hockenberry, about his adventures reporting the news—for National Public Radio and for television—from a wheelchair. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Universe—In Richard Foreman's latest mind-wrenching vaudeville, three cheerfully desperate oddballs (James Urbaniak, Tony Torn, and Mary McBride) attempt to discover universal truths, behave normally, and find love in a thoroughly unknowable, abnormal, and inhospitable world. As usual, Foreman encumbers his actors with a funhouse set and delightfully unwieldy props. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic, and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is patchwork. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo, at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Virgins and Other Myths—Colin Martin's one-man show—a sort of "This Gay Boy's Life"—is an explicit though graceful dive into the depths of his own psyche. He shuttles between a chronological narrative and psychological milestones in his life, now and then stopping to wonder just when it was, exactly, that he lost his virginity. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

A Whistle in the Dark—The Irish Repertory Theatre reprises its 1989 production of Thomas Murphy's satire of politics and the family. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

The Winter's Tale—The Pearl Theatre's static staging of Shakespeare's late tragicomedy lacks the unifying vision of the recent Bergman and Royal Shakespeare Company imports; it doesn't bring much more to the May-December marriage of Bohemia and Sicilia than an oddly cast hodgepodge of bland actors. Director Kathryn Long seems intent on showing off the play's disunities and incongruities, but even if this really is her aim, she pulls it off with none of the exuberance, however infuriating, of so much postmodern stagecraft. This production feels more like staid suburban theatre than like rowdy urban theatre. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes March 16.)

Working Class—Almost every one of the eight laborers that Richard Hoehler portrays in his one-man show is disenchanted; he aims to put humble yet heroic faces on the nation's workers, but he barely penetrates the experience of his subjects, leaving their personalities as sketchy as the category "working class" itself. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-9434. Closes March 10.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **THE FOOD CHAIN:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . ***HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:*** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. (Closes March 24.). . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

Feld Ballets/NY—March 6 at 8: "The Grand Canon," "Santa Fe Saga," "Asia," and "Doo Dah Day." . . . ¶ March 7 at 8 and March 10 at 4: "Harbinger," "Kore," "With Dew Upon Their Feet," and "Ludwig Gambits." . . . ¶ March 8 at 8: "La Vida," "Clave," "Gnossiennes," and "The Jig Is

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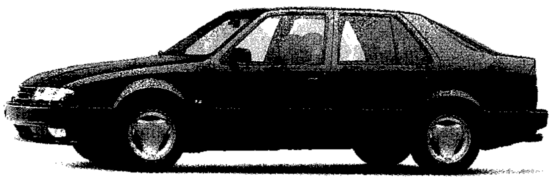

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—Studs Terkel

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Up." . . . . ¶ March 9 at 2 and March 10 at noon: "Kids Dance," featuring repertory works performed by dancers chosen from city schools. . . . ¶ March 9 and March 12, both at 8: "Ah Scarlatti," "Ion," "Ogive," and "Paper Tiger" (première). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 31.)

NATIONAL BALLET OF SPAIN—The fifty-one-member troupe from Madrid closes its engagement with a flamenco suite ("A Ritmo y a Compas"), matador capework ("Oración del Torero"), and a bolero for high heels and castanets ("Chacona"). (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. March 6-8 at 8, March 9 at 2 and 8, and March 10 at 3.)

MUSIC AND DANCE OF MANIPUR—The dancers, drummers, and martial artists of Ranganiketan, a company from the secluded North Indian state bordering on Myanmar, perform sacred Rasa Lila-style dance, *thang-ta* sword fighting, and devotional song. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 10 at 7.)

"HOMEMADE"—Brazilian choreographers Rosane Chamecki and Andrea Lerner collaborate with Mexican-American filmmaker Lorenzo Shapiro and Dutch painter Bas Bremer on a full-length work about home. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 7-10 at 9.)

LES BALLETS JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL—The Québécois company performs "Ghosts," by James Kudelka, "Pendulum," by Crystal Pite, and "It's in the Air," by Rodrigo Pederneiras. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6100. March 8-9 at 8.)

FACE THE MUSIC AND DANCE—The annual Symphony Space series opens with choreographer Maia Claire Garrison and M'zawa Danz facing saxophonist Steve Coleman and Five Elements. The dancers and musicians perform separate sets, then combine forces for the première of their structured improvisation, "Sbladam!" (March 7 at 8.)

"BREATH"—Emily Dickinson's writings serve as text and inspiration for the twelve members of Wichern/Wolfson Dance & Music. The program offers both dancing and singing versions of the New England recluse and concludes with a sampling of gingerbread prepared according to the poet's recipe. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 7-10 at 8:30.)

PEARL LANG DANCE THEATRE—The modern-dance choreographer returns with two re-creations ("Shira," from 1960, and "Korus," from 1990), a revision of last year's Schubert suite, and a première (the solo "Dream Voyage," for Kevin Predmore). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 9 at 8 and March 10 at 4.)

JIUTA-MAI CLASSICAL DANCE—Dancer-choreographer Suzushi Hanayagi, actress-dancer Shiho Fujimura, and singer Kiyotaka Tomiyama relate love stories of feudal Japan in song (*jiuta*) and dance (*mai*), using movements derived from the restrained dancing of Kansai courtesans and merchants' daughters of the Genroku era (1688-1703). (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. March 7-8 at 8.)

"PROGRESSIONS"—Mary Seidman and Dancers trace the cycle of the seasons with four mood pieces: "Shades of Green," "Sands," "Sheaves," and "Between the Lines." (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 629-3107. March 8 at 9 and March 9-10 at 8.)

K. D. Lang, at Radio City.

JENNY WILLIAMS

NIGHT LIFE

DONNA SUMMER—Toot, toot. Beep, beep. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. March 6 at 8.)

TRAVIS TRITT—With hits like "Here's a Quarter (Call Someone Who Cares)" and "Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof," this unrepentant good old boy displays a Southern-rock orneriness that's something of an anomaly in the sensitive New Age Nashville of the nineties. Now if he would only do something about those leather outfits. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. March 7 at 8.)

K. D. LANG—In eschewing the country flavor on her latest record, "All You Can Eat," Lang traded in her long-standing Patsy Cline fetish for a sort of onanistic Bryan Ferry languor. She now finds herself with her first certified flop. But no one should attribute this failure to the wrath of alienated fans or to the flaws of "All You Can Eat"—which, despite the ennui that hobbles the record, her prodigious voice still lifts far above anything else in the cutout bins. Instead, she has fallen victim to the sort of career-crippling backlash that has afflicted everyone from Joan Collins to Tiny Tim. Over the past few years, Lang has allowed herself to be reduced to a vegetarian-lesbian-Canadian something-or-other, and thus let her formidable talent be overshadowed by shtick. Still, anyone who can pack this grand old hall for three nights can't have too many worries. She appears with her excellent band, minus her longtime collaborator Ben Mink. (Radio City Music Hall. March 7-9 at 8.)

BENNY CARTER—At eighty-eight, Carter is still recording and touring, still playing magisterial alto sax, and still turning out full-length orchestral pieces. This salute to the hardest-working man in jazz introduces a new Carter opus (conducted by Wynton Marsalis) and then, with help from a bevy of singers that includes Bobby Short and Joe Williams, presents selections from the recently released "Benny Carter Songbook." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 9 at 8.)

GAVIN FRIDAY—It takes a bit of patience to appreciate this Irish androgyne's low, breathy tenor, but once you're hooked you're in for a delirious treat: he's Leonard Cohen, Marianne Faithful, and Marc Bolan all rolled into one. His new record, "Shag Tobacco," is filled with smoky material best suited for a modern Weimar cabaret. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. March 9 at 9.)

WARREN VACHE, HOWARD ALDEN, AND MICHAEL MOORE—These three musicians—who play trumpet, guitar, and bass, respectively—are generals in the gently subversive army of mainstream jazz. By immersing themselves in melody and the purest tone, they've been fortifying the city with lyricism and grace for years; together, they're a chamber-jazz supergroup. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. 752-1428. March 10 at 5.)

"A PARTY FOR ZOOT"—Eleven years after his death, the great saxophonist Zoot Sims is still deeply missed; among those commiserating with the audience will be Junior Mance and John and Bucky Pizzarelli. (Century Café, 132 W. 43rd St. 580-0210, ext. 222. March 10 at 6:30.)

ROD STEWART—The last time he of the leonine mane and the ripped-pajamas voice stepped into the Garden he was probably taking in a Rangers game—and much of Rod the Mod's louche appeal comes from a sense that he'd be just as happy on the terraces at a soccer match (or seducing somebody's girlfriend down at the local) as onstage. It's been one supermodel marriage and more than two decades since his boozy days with the Faces, but Mr. Stewart can still be naughty when he wants to be, as he is on his latest record, "Spanner in the Works." (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 11-12 at 8.)

The Chieftains—It wouldn't be St. Patrick's Day week without a visit from Ireland's musical ambassadors. From their late-fifties work as members of Sean O Riada's visionary ensemble, Ceoltoiri Cualann, to their recent collaborations with Van Morrison and James Galway, these instrumental wizards have been doing for traditional Irish music what Bill Monroe did for the rural American string band—treating it with a respect and dignity that lift it well above any salt-of-the-earth contentiousness. (Westbury Music Fair. March 12 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**JULIE WILSON** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 10: a double bill featuring **BOBBY WATSON** and **SPECIAL EFX.** Watson, an alto saxophonist of earthy passion, has plugged in and gone even funkier with his Urban Renewal band; Special EFX plays above-average fusion. Starting March 12: the **MC COY TYNER** trio. Had this pianist retired after leaving John Coltrane's group in 1965, he'd still be remembered as one of the most brilliant and individualistic players of an era that prized iconoclasm in its musicians. Tyner never succumbed to the temptations of an electronic age; on his seventies records, he didn't have to amplify his piano to make it thunder and ring with authority. A certain laxness pervades his eighties work, but his drive returned with the dawn of the nineties. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through March 9: a trio featuring **RUSSELL MALONE.** Malone is the new guitarist on the block, and he brings two pals to see him through: Renee Rosnes, one of the great piano accompanists, and the fine bassist Ed Howard. Drummer **LEON PARKER** takes over on March 11. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through mid-March, **DIXIE CARTER.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—**JOHN SCOFIELD** (in through March 10) knows how to write a great melody and assemble a band. He favors tricky, asymmetrical lines over generic flash; where his peers tend to be marathon runners, Scofield is an ambler. The key to his appeal is simple: within this cultivated guitarist beats the heart of a twisted bluesman. The **STANLEY TURRENTINE** quintet takes over on March 12. You judge a tenor player like Turrentine not by his virtuosity or his ideas but by his sound: a gritty, soulful calling card. He recently pledged renewed allegiance to his jazz roots, and, cleansed of his pop-funk noodling, he's now making quite a show of himself. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—March 6-9: Piano and bass with Mike LeDonne and Jon Webber.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 10: **MEDESKI, MARTIN, AND WOOD.** Last year, after opening for the Grateful Deadish band Phish, this combo found itself with a whole new group of fans. Driven by John Medeski's Hammond organ, the trio (which also includes bass and drums) throws a lot into the blender—funk, Coltrane, and some let's-just-mess-around-and-make-a-funny-sound stuff. They have a great time with it, and so do their newfound fans.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Vocalist-actress **LINDA LAVIN** is the current star-in-residence. March 10: Singing sisters Liz and Ann Hampton Callaway. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The Chestnut Room may resemble a hunting lodge decorated by Liberace, but the performances here are no joke. Vocalist Tom Andersen is in through March 10. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **TOMMY FLANAGAN** trio has the stage for the next two weeks. Flanagan, who is in his sixties, now presides over all of jazz piano. Of a poetic cast, he unreels endlessly supple lines at whatever speed they demand. He likes to spread the melody out in chords in the first chorus, then compress the song into brand-new single-note improvisations that contain sudden ascending arpeggios, beautiful little counter-melodies, and patches of mock double time. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Through March 9: **DAVE LIEBMAN.** While most sax players merely double on the soprano, Liebman devotes his full attention to that horn, revealing new depths of passion and lyricism. March 12: The **BOBBY PREVITE** group. This drummer is one of the most assured musicians to surface from the downtown scene in the past decade. He's equal parts superb player, daring composer, and articulate bandleader, and his

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THE ART OF WRITING

ensembles speak a singular, visionary language. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through March 9: pianist Roy Meriwether leads a trio. Dining.

A BARBECUE ROUNDUP

From West Texas to the Carolina coast, barbecue—wood-smoked meat in a spicy sauce (any more specific description could start a fight)—has shaped a culture. Few vegetarians win primaries in those parts, so the candidates had better be ready to eat about four pounds of meat with a plastic fork and pass the paper plate for seconds. Herewith, a few local options for the next time you tie on the feed bag.

Sylvia's, 328 Lenox Ave., at 126th St. (996-0660)—After more than thirty years in the business, this legendary soul-food haven has the right to boast. Ribs appear on the menu as Sylvia's World Famous Talked About Bar-B-Que, and, considering the hearty, smoky flavor of the meat, this is no exaggeration. In fact, Sylvia's has mastered one of the most difficult of barbecue feats: a sweet sauce that doesn't descend into syrup, with just the right spiciness and kick. An appetizer of warm, sweet corn bread starts the meal, and the side dishes (creamy mashed potatoes, collard greens cooked with smoked turkey) are excellent. Sylvia's has a lunch counter, too, and between it and the two dining rooms—one cavernlike in dark-green wallpaper, another painted with a festive tropical-island motif—you can find the right décor for almost any mood.

Stick to Your Ribs, 5-16 51st Ave., Long Island City, Queens (1-718 937-3030)—When you open the door, a rich hickory scent engulfs you, delivers a gentle cuff on the neck, and then pulls you into a red-and-white-tiled room that may be the closest thing to an authentic barbecue joint this side of the Mason-Dixon line. The barbecue is sold in sandwiches or by the pound. A guy standing three feet from the register chops your order, and the meat is near perfect: brisket that is dark on the outside, shading to a tender pink at the center; huge, moist beef ribs; North Carolina-style pork (though it's a bit heavier than the real thing). There are four grades of sauce—mild, medium, madness, and mean. The fries are crispy and come with the skin on, and the pork beans are meaty, thick, and hot. Canned soda and bottled beer are serve-yourself, and you eat with plastic "sporks." All this just one stop into Queens on the No. 7, on a street that offers a magnificent view of the Empire State Building. (Last year, a branch opened on the Upper West Side, but it burned down on Christmas Day.)

Tennessee Mountain, 143 Spring St., at Wooster St. (431-3993)—Pork or beef, grilled or smoked: there are ribs here aplenty, and if you thought SoHo was only good for latte, surprise!—they're great. The restaurant serves beef brisket and pulled pork, too (both come in a hot and tangy sauce), but it's the ribs, with their crispy, blackened edges, that compensate for Tennessee Mountain's rather postmodern sense of barbecue culture. Sure, the Texas egg rolls (fried chili peppers stuffed with chicken and cheese) are tasty, but the collard greens are too nouvelle for their own good, and the standards—corn bread, black-eyed peas—are nowhere to be found. Desserts are above-average, with sweet-potato-pecan pie leading the pack. The space is either cramped or intimate, depending on your mood.

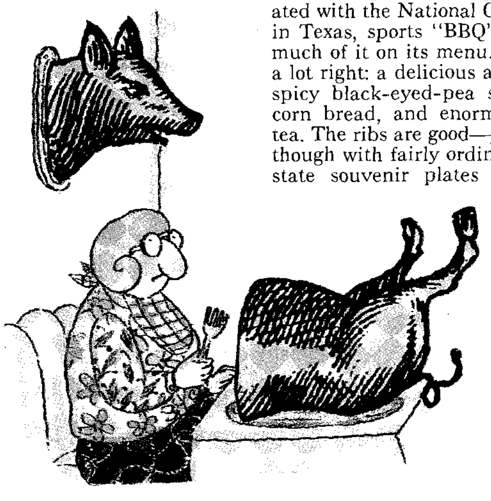
Emily's, 1325 Fifth Ave., at 111th St. (996-1212)—With its relaxed atmosphere and its pastel pink and yellow walls, Emily's seems, at first glance, too delicate a place to get real food. Don't be fooled: this soul-food establishment serves up some of the best side dishes in town—hearty collard greens, artery-clogging potato salad, and warm, sweet corn bread that goes down like birthday cake. They're so good, in fact, that the barbecue suffers by comparison. The chopped pork is rich and filling, and the ribs are tasty, but they both founder under the sauce, a thick, mellow concoction without the twang that propels great barbecue off the plate and down your throat. They do the job, though. If you eat too much—and you will—a stroll down to the Conservatory Garden, at Fifth Avenue and 105th Street, will afford the pleasant illusion that you're walking it off.

Brothers Barbecue, 225 Varick St., at Clarkson St. (727-2775)—Brothers serves up some of the best pulled pork in Manhattan, and the ribs are finer than frog hair. The side dishes are great—mashed sweet potatoes are the best—and the kitchen has the good sense to serve the meat up plain and let you add your own sauce. But the restaurant moved a few months ago, and dining at the new Brothers feels a lot like eating barbecue in a high-school gym (though there's nothing wrong with that, of course, if you're attending a fund-raiser for the volunteer fire department).

The Hog Pit, 22 Ninth Ave., at 13th St. (604-0092)—In its manufactured rusticity, the Hog Pit resembles a taxidermist's yard sale: boars' heads share the walls with stuffed birds, trophy fish, and bovine skulls. The barbecue is tasty—the sauce is good, if somewhat sweet—but the meat is minced way too fine, making it better suited for a sandwich than for a plate with a couple of sides. (That may be just as well: the sides are the weak sisters here.) Still, this is a great place for a cold beer, a quick meal, and a bit of down-home flavor—that is, if you don't mind being stared at by your dinner.

Virgil's, 152 W. 44th St. (921-9494)—As their place mats testify, the folks at Virgil's have travelled hither and yon to bring the nation's barbecue to Manhattan, and they may be victims of their own ambition: as you contemplate this bi-level barbecue theme park, the phrase "jack of all trades, master of none" springs to mind. Beef brisket and Carolina pork are the best choices (the dry ribs are worth trying, too), but the real standouts are the jalapeño corn bread and the wonderful mashed potatoes. The restaurant offers up steaming towels at the end of your meal—a dash of elegance that, no matter how incongruous, is appreciated.

Cowgirl Hall of Fame, 519 Hudson St., at W. 10th St. (633-1133)—This Tex-Mex joint and country-kitsch emporium, loosely affiliated with the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame, in Texas, sports "BBQ" in its logo but not much of it on its menu. Still, the place gets a lot right: a delicious appetizer of cold and spicy black-eyed-pea salsa, huge slabs of corn bread, and enormous glasses of iced tea. The ribs are good—juicy, if a tad fatty—though with fairly ordinary sauce. Western-state souvenir plates and cowgirl paintings line the walls; a small gift shop sells boot-shaped mugs and ceramic cacti; and a shrine of sorts to Patsy Montana, the ur-cowgirl, displays one of her guitars, one of her costumes, and photographs of her with a veritable *Who's Who* of the singing-cowboy set.



VICTORIA ROBERTS

ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 8-9: the **BLUES PROJECT.**

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—March 11: Up-and-coming singer-songwriter **SORAYA.**

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—March 6: the **NUDES.** The fierce and uncompromising singer **TOSHI REAGON** (March 9) once gave up a major record deal because the suits wanted to reshape her image; now she releases her records herself. On the brilliant "The Rejected Stone" (1994), she draws on the African-American song tradition revitalized by her mom, Bernice Johnson Reagon, a founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock. Her shows are celebratory—a shower of retro funk, urban blues, and folk—and they're all sung with evangelical fervor. To hear her is to believe. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—March 12: **FOETUS.** With the Morning Glories and Elysian Fields.

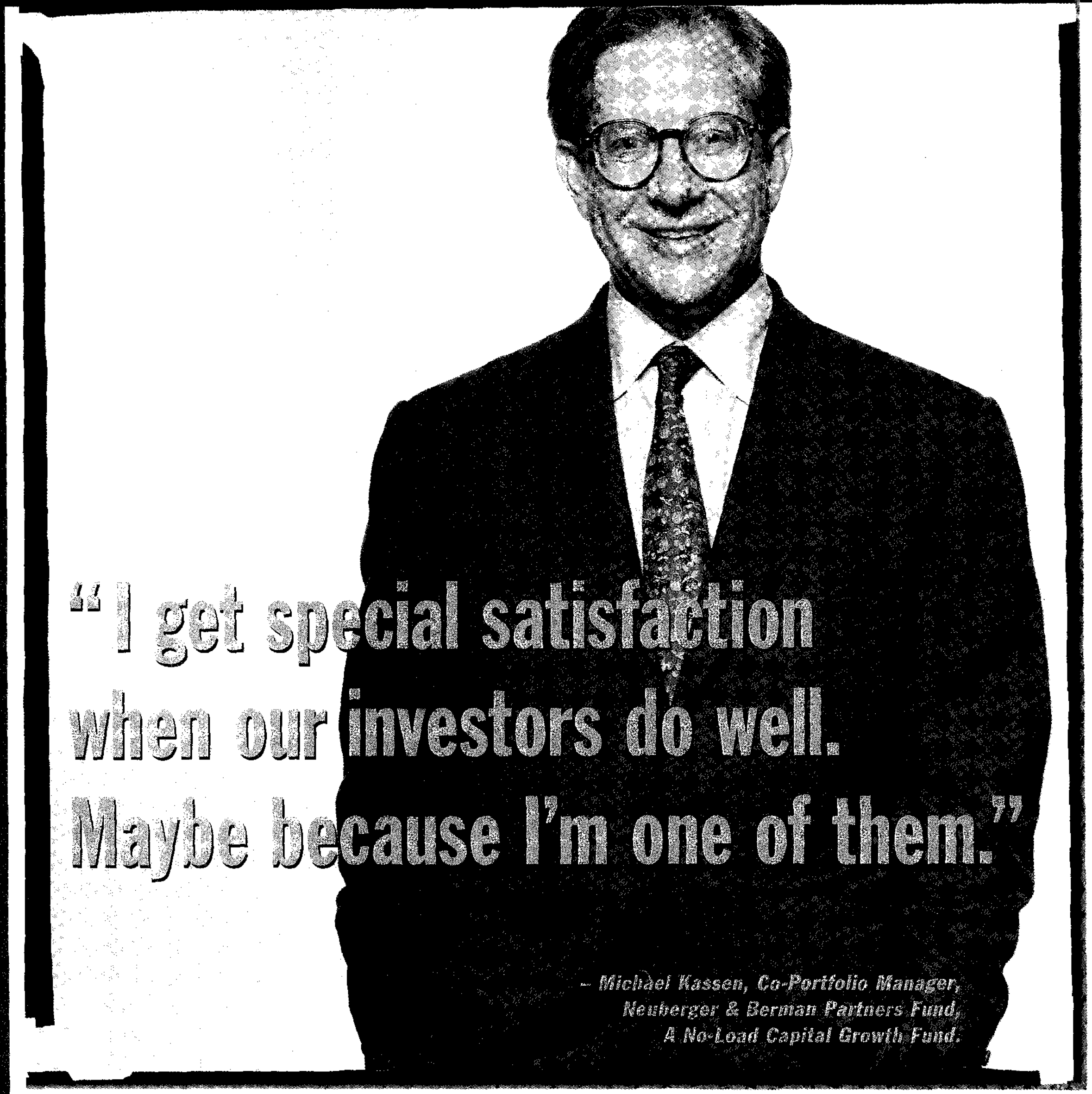
Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 6: **YOKO ONO.** On "Rising," her powerful recent disk, Ono gives voice to a lot of repressed emotions that have been brewing since the death of John Lennon. Her liner notes, which draw parallels between her childhood in Japan during the Second World War and her current life in AIDS-ravaged New York, are some of the most eloquent prose you'll find in a rock album. And the music—reggae-tinged funk, howling punk, and suffocating pop, provided by Sean Lennon and his band, IMA—provides a cathartic backdrop for her vocal fireworks, while the chemistry between mother and son makes this album her finest work since the days of the Plastic Ono Band. Though she's been demonized for decades, she's as cool and daring as she ever was; maybe now we're finally catching up with her.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—March 6: Lounge music with the **SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—March 7: **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS.** It's been a decade since John Flansburgh and John Linnell first performed jerky little pop songs while wearing improbably enormous masks. (They later observed that "everybody wants prosthetic foreheads on their real heads.") The Brooklyn-based duo has been unmasked for some time, but their jerky little pop songs—cleverly crafted and full of surreal humor—flow unabated, as their infamous Dial-a-Song (1-718 387-6962) happily attests. March 9: **RUN ON.** Their recent début, "On/Off," sounds like it was written and recorded in an afternoon, but it's altogether too brainy to qualify as your average slacker soundtrack. Live, the band has been known to make a mighty impressive noise.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—March 9: **BOSS HOG.** This group is fronted by the wife-and-husband duo Cristina Martinez and John Spencer (best known for his own band, the Blues Explosion), who once worked together in the barely listenable noise-punk band Pussy Galore. In Boss Hog, they barrel through their own brand of mutated blues. With her fashion-mag looks, Martinez may be the star of this show, but it's Spencer's yowls and yelps that add oomph to the package. When they trade come-ons like "I dig your groovy hips / I dig your barbecue lips," they generate real, sweaty chemistry.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Partners Fund Average Annual Total Returns For Periods Ended 12/31/95

1 year	5 year	10 year	Life of Fund*
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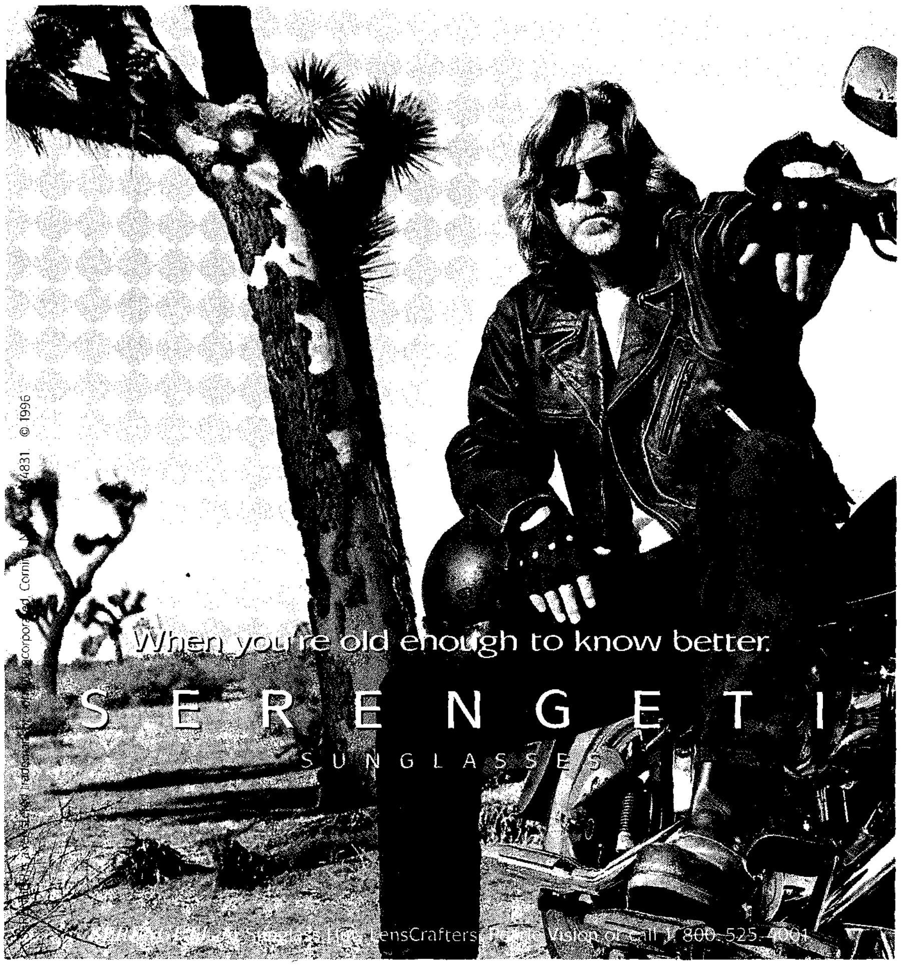
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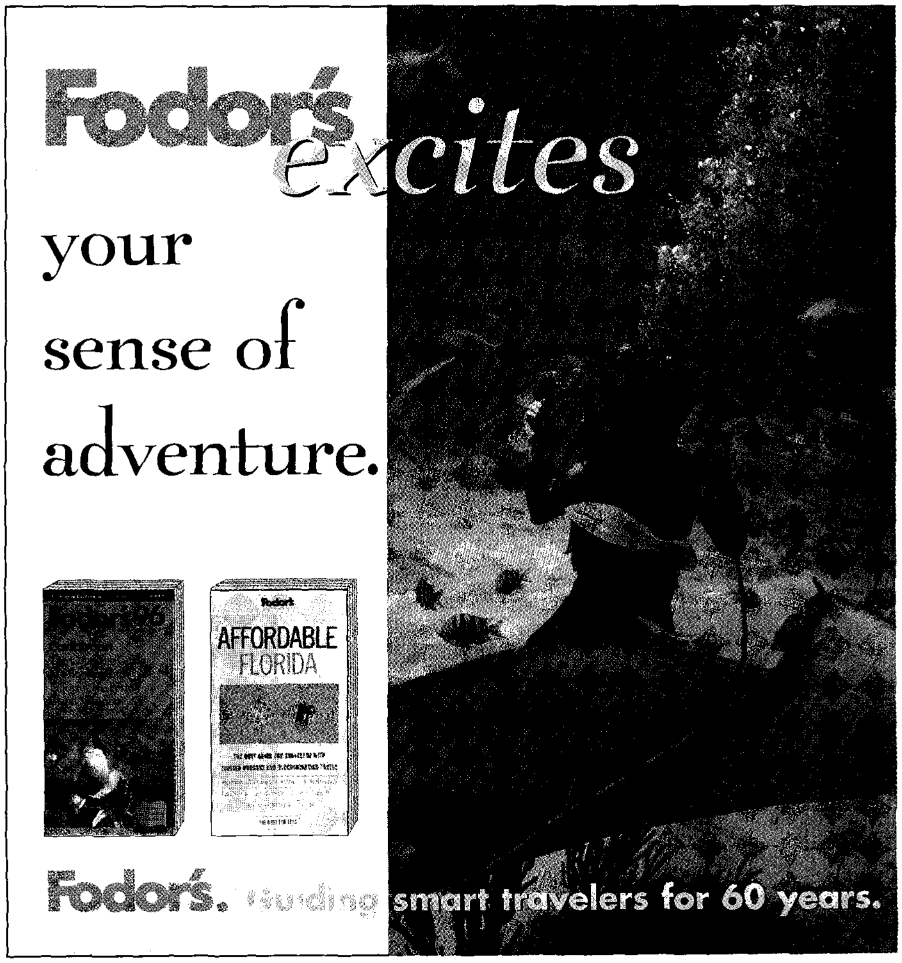
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ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Fabergé in America." In 1885, the warrant of "Supplier to the Imperial Court" was bestowed upon the House of Fabergé, and the rest is legend. The St. Petersburg jeweler and goldsmith Peter Carl Fabergé and his master craftsmen designed thousands of decorative objects and fantasy creations using such precious and semiprecious materials as colored gold, platinized silver, gems, malachite, ivory, and lapis lazuli. The most celebrated by far are the imperial Easter eggs, commissioned first by Alexander III, for his czarina, and later by Nicholas II. Fifteen of the forty-four extant eggs can be found in this exhibit of works from American collections, which also includes more than four hundred baskets, vases, table clocks, cigarette boxes, and other delights. Through April 28. . . . ¶ "Poussin: Works on Paper." A rich trove of drawings, from the collection of Queen Elizabeth II, by the greatest Classicist of the Baroque era. Many are studies for large-scale works on mythological or Biblical subjects; others, however, are unrelated to any known paintings. Amid such bounty it seems almost silly to single out specific works. Still, one might linger over "St. Mary of Egypt Receiving Communion from St. Zosimus" (c. 1634-36): a drawing from the artist's Roman period, it depicts the two saints as small figures in an expansive wooded landscape, and much of its beauty and poignancy derives from the contrast between the saints' intimate communion and the vastness of the natural setting. Through March 31. . . . ¶ A complementary exhibit of seventeenth-century French drawings from the museum's collection is also on display. . . . ¶ "Enamels of Limoges," a slew of precious objects dating from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries—medallions, reliquaries, portable altars, and such—from the French town's abbey workshops. Through June 16. . . . ¶ The museum's African galleries have reopened after a nine-month renovation; on view are more than four hundred works from the kingdoms of Benin, Owo, Ijebu, Danhomé, Bangwa, and many others. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—When Paris's Georges Pompidou Center sent its big Brancusi retrospective on the road last year, its American destination was Philadelphia, not New York. As a happy consolation prize, fourteen choice sculptures from that show have now been loaned to MOMA; combined with ten of MOMA's own, they form a tantalizing mini-retrospective that represents the master at his best: the wood-and-limestone "Exotic Plant," at once primitive and unspeakably sophisticated; two big, comical oak cups; a set of four tilted heads, in bronze, plaster, and wood, so dreamy that you almost drift away; and the sublime gray-marble "Fish." The Modern's walnut "Cock" (1924) has been briefly reunited with its original pedestal from Brancusi's studio and paired with the Pompidou's 1935 bronze "Cock." Through April 23. . . . ¶ Michael Schmidt's "U-NI-TY," a series of a hundred black-and-white photographs depicting aspects of Germany since reunification. (The German title, "Ein-heit," makes a lot more sense.) Half of the pictures are Schmidt's own ordinary photographs (some of them *very* ordinary); the other half are photographs of photographs, mostly gruesome shots from newspapers and propaganda leaflets. Smiling faces, monumental sculptures, and blocky headlines are all treated in the same toneless fashion. The result is irritating and heavy-handed, but he gets his point across. Through March 26. . . . ¶ A large retrospective of black-and-white photographs from the late forties to the present by Roy DeCarava. Among the subjects are jazz musicians, street and subway life, and urban civil-rights protests. Through May 7. . . . ¶ Drawings, an architectural model, and documentary photographs provide an overview of the German designer Lilly Reich's work, which included several installations for clothing, housing, and building-materials expositions in the twenties and thirties. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Sol LeWitt Prints, 1970-1995." Through May 7. . . . ¶ The "Projects" series presents knitted and embroidered works by Oliver Herring and Leonilson. Through March 12. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline." Curator Mark Rosenthal has assembled an exhibition chockablock with nonobjective (i.e., abstract) masterpieces—and it's worth recalling that the Guggenheim was founded as the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. The works are superb, from early Kandinskys and Maleviches to the mute totems of minimalism which have dominated abstract art since the sixties, but some of the elisions are galling. Where are Hans Hofmann, Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis? Why so few women? Why *nine* Rymans but not even one Marden? And why does this survey end, limply, with Martin Puryear and Richard Long, without including any artists who came to the fore after the seventies? Partisans of all ideological stripes will find something to gripe about in Rosenthal's refashioning of art history to suit his tastes. In short, a beautiful failure. Through May 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of a hundred assemblages, constructed from scavenged street and flea-market materials, by Edward Kienholz (1927-94) and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "Joseph Cornell: Cosmic Travels." Box constructions and collages from the fifties and sixties by America's homegrown Surrealist. Through March 10. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Amber: Window to the Past." Since the Mesolithic Period (9000-6000 B.C.), human beings have carved amulets out of fossilized tree resin. But all sorts of things—butterflies, tree frogs, geckos—were getting stuck in amber at a considerably earlier date; the oldest known fossils (on view here) are entrapped in ninety-four-million-year-old amber from New Jersey. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Alone in a Crowd: Prints by African-American Artists from the 1930s-1940s." Through April 21 . . . . ¶ "A Slice of Schiaparelli: Surrealism in Fashion." Fifty examples of the stylish inspirations of Elsa Schiaparelli (1890-1973): evening gloves with reptilian scales; a day suit with metallic ladybugs, grasshoppers, and cockroaches creeping across it; a hat of celluloid grapes; and more. Through March 24. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Academy of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—The academy's annual invitational exhibition of paintings and sculptures includes works by Rosemarie Beck, Debra Bermingham, Zachary Ehrenreich, Jim Nutt, and William Tucker. Through March 31. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A small exhibition of four pastel portraits and two oils by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, done in Paris during the turbulent seventeen-nineties. Through April 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Two works by the writer and filmmaker Leandro Katz. A few dozen photographs and a large photo-based installation are on view from "The Catherwood Project," a decade-long endeavor that produced twenty-seven hundred photographs attempting to reconstruct the 1839 and 1841 expeditions of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood to Mayan centers in Guatemala, Honduras, and the Yucatán. The aim is to excavate the assumptions and perceptions of the two travellers, the first English-speaking explorers of the region. The second work, titled "Project for the Day You'll Love Me" (after the famous Argentinean tango), is concerned with the last eleven months in the life of Che Guevara. Through May 5. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Memory: Luba Art and the Making of History." A show of royal objects—*lukasas* (memory boards), thrones, staffs, weapons, etc.—created to insure that the Central African kingdom and its family histories would be remembered. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"A Labor of Love" includes works by contemporary artists who use folk- or craft-oriented processes. Among the pieces on view are miniature chairs carved out of soap, by Michael Harms; sewn banana-peel slippers, by Nöle Guilini; cartoonish dolls, by Faith Ringgold; and Liza Lou's full-sized kitchen, entirely covered with small colored beads. Through April 14. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

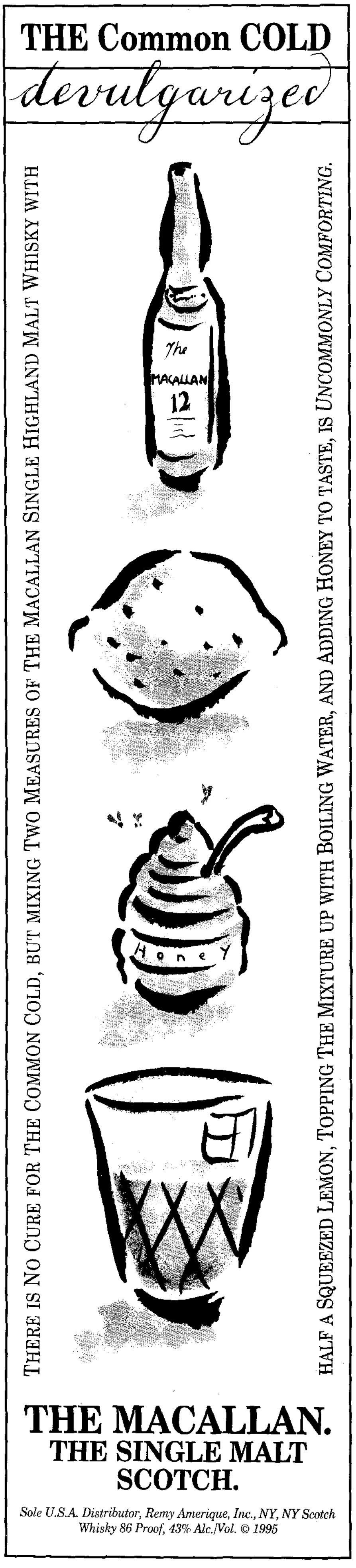
Matthew Antezzo—Grisaille works on paper from a young artist who uses images out of old art magazines as source material, typically dwelling on ephemeral moments from sixties and seventies avant-garde videos, performances, and installations which have been preserved in the journalistic archive as if in amber. The way history is inscribed and the various channels through which it is passed along are the artist's true subjects. Through March 16. (Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St.)

Daniele Galliano—Tightly framed portraits, night-club scenes, and New York streetscapes by a Turin-based artist who paints in a blurry, out-of-focus variant of Photo-Realism. The compositions are cinematic—a disco floor, seen from overhead, swirls with atmosphere; an East Village folk singer looms monumentally against a gray sky—but the painterly finesse sits rather uneasily with all the urban energy. Through March 13. (Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Robert Grosvenor—Two shows. At Cooper (155 Wooster St.), a pair of sculptures in red brick, slate, wood, sheet metal, plastic, and such. At Markey (55 Vandam St.), a survey of similarly various drawings, from 1968 to 1994, done with pencil, colored pen, masking tape, and strips of metal on paper. Both shows through March 23.

Roni Horn—A wall-to-wall rubber floor mat embedded with thirty-eight adjectives used to describe the weather. Two squares of gold foil, one on top of the other, in an otherwise empty room. A hundred photographs of the same woman. An aluminum-and-plastic rectangle that says "49 miles." Two hundred and sixteen cubes bearing the letters of the word "ephemeral." You can say that again and again and again and again. Through April 14. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Jutta Koether—Exuberant, cartoonlike drawings by a German artist. The suites hang together with a loony grace, but even better



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are the books, in which funky line drawings and watercolors of French fries, belly dancers, Karl Lagerfeld, the planet Earth, and lots of other stuff are randomly bound together. Many of the drawings are on tracing paper or Mylar, so the images overlap and bleed through each other in an agreeably sloppy way. Through March 10. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"Counterculture"—Subtitled "Alternative Information from the Underground Press to the Internet," this historical survey digs up more than a thousand newspapers, zines, digital publications, pamphlets, and other paraphernalia from the mid-sixties on. Through April 20. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

"*Un*naturally Yours"—More or less kinetic sculptures, having to do with the four elements. Sculptor Willie Cole has selected the works, by six young artists: Alejandro Berlin, Nicole Carstens, Daniel O. Georges, Ben Jones, Wendy Lewis, and Peter Whitney. Through March 16. (Artists Space, 38 Greene St.)

Group Show—Large wood, fabric, and string wall reliefs by Leonardo Drew; the first New York exhibit by the London painter Mark Francis; and knitted sculptures by Oliver Herring (who also has work up at MOMA). This is the gallery's final show before the Boone clan migrates to 57th Street. Through April 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Short List—**dan asher,** Inglett, 100 Wooster St. Through March 30. . . . **lisa beck** and **lucky de bellevue,** Feature, 76 Greene St. Through March 30. . . . **gregory corn,** Arstark, 568 Broadway. Through March 30. . . . **leon golub,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. Through March 30. . . . **luke gray,** Erben, 284 Mott St. Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 1 to 6:30; Saturdays, 11 to 6; through March 30. . . . **candida höfer,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **y. z. kami,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. Through March 30. . . . **alex katz,** Blum, 99 Wooster St. Through March 16. . . . **ed paschke,** Kind, 136 Greene St. Through March 12. . . . **antoine paoletti,** 123 Watts Gallery, 123 Watts St. Opens at noon; through April 4. . . . **julian schnabel,** Pace Wildenstein and Sperone Westwater, both at 142 Greene St. Both shows through March 23. . . . **peter voulkos** and **darren waterston,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **randy walz** and **david storey,** Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through March 24. . . . **steve wolfe,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through March 30. . . . **betty woodman,** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through March 23.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

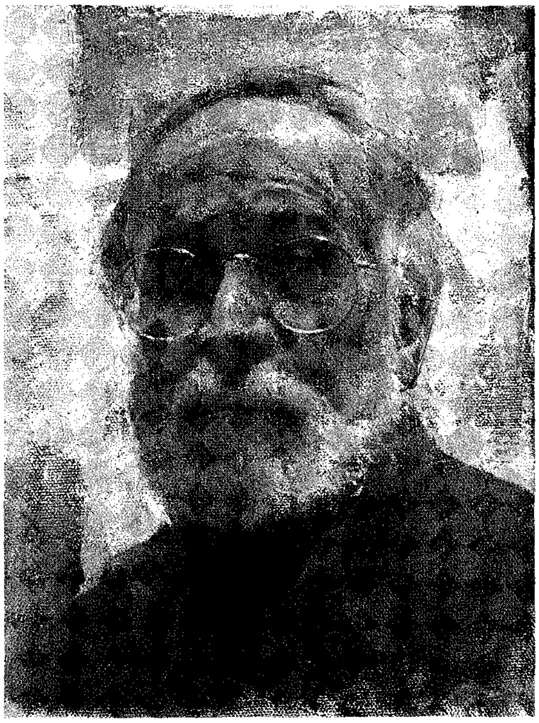
Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947)—Watercolors and pastels by the master colorist possessed with a nervous passion for drawing everything he saw around him. Through March 23. (Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. Open Mondays.)

Milton Resnick / Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988)—Five big, deep, beautiful paintings with the same title, "U & Me," by a master abstractionist, now eighty years old, who has turned to mythopoeic figuration. Ghastly, shadowy figures, like reimagined Munch phantasms, flutter and flail beneath elemental trees and lowering skies, all rendered in rich, sombre impasto. An important show. / More doodles by the boy wonder—the sort of thing that will be liked by people who like that sort of thing. Through March 9. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Burton Silverman—Recent oil paintings by an artist who illustrated Profiles for this magazine for thirty years. Through March 9. (Wunderlich, 50 W. 57th St.)

"Building the Collective: Soviet Graphic Design, 1917-1937"—A vivid and comprehensive survey of Soviet posters. Luminaries are here (Rodchenko, Lissitzky, the Stenberg brothers), but so are such lesser-known artists as Viktor Deni, Elena Semenova, and Natal'ia Pinus. Through March 30. (Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

"On Paper" / Lucian Freud—A large gathering of drawings by twenty-nine artists, including Terry Winters, Wayne Thiebaud, Catherine Murphy, Cy Twombly, Philip Taaffe, Georg Baselitz, Ellsworth Kelly, and Magdalena Abakanowicz. / Etchings executed since 1948. Both shows through March 9. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)



Self-portrait by Burton Silverman (Wunderlich).

Short List—**robert arneson,** Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through March 30. . . . **steven assael,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. Through March 23. . . . **drew beattie and daniel davidson,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through March 30. . . . **andrás böröcz,** Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. Through March 9. . . . **vija celmins,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through April 5. . . . **mary frank,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through March 9. . . . **adolph gottlieb,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Through March 9. . . . **morris graves,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through March 30. . . . **john lees,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through March 23. . . . **andrew masullo** and **keith haring,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through March 30 and March 23, respectively. . . . **a. r. penck,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays. Through March 9. . . . **max weber,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through March 9. . . . **steve wheeler,** Snyder, 20 W. 57th St. Through March 16.

OTHER VENUES

"Six Bridges: The Making of the New York Megalopolis"—The six in question are the George Washington, the Bayonne, the Triborough, the Bronx-Whitestone, the Throgs Neck, and the Verrazano-Narrows; all of them were designed by the preëminent engineer Othmar H. Ammann (who also designed the Lincoln Tunnel and supervised construction of the Golden Gate Bridge). Architectural drawings, maps, photographs, and film clips trace the history of each undertaking. Organized by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. Through April 19. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

Works on Paper—Ninety international dealers assemble for this influential show, sponsored annually by Sanford Smith. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. March 7-10. For information, call 777-5218.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Lola Alvarez Bravo (1907-93)—Thirty-eight vintage and contemporary prints spanning the career of the pioneering Mexican modernist. Through March 16. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St.)

Harry Callahan—A survey of the many different themes and variations the phtographer has explored, in black-and-white and color, since the forties. Through April 6. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Bruce Cratsley—Cratsley's reputation as a master of light and shadow is certainly borne out in this generous twenty-year retrospective. Most of the quiet, warm-toned views here—of fireworks over the Brooklyn Bridge, sculpture fragments at the Met, a window of the Louvre—are impeccably balanced, meditative studies. But two pictures, "For Lisette" (1976) and "Waiting, Grand Central" (1983), push further into the poetic with daring, fragile compositions and a wealth of grisaille and black tones that produce complex, nearly flawless gems. Through March 23. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

Bill Jacobson—Large, rich, black-and-white (charcoal-and-platinum, really) images of attenuated male and female figures on the verge of disappearing into the dark beyond. For all their technical virtuosity, these pictures succeed only as elegiac emblems of the sublime—not as sublime works of art. Through March 23. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

Fred W. McDarrah—The longtime *Village Voice* photojournalist and picture editor shows documentary photographs, made between 1958 and 1978, of New York School artists: Kline, Bourgeois, the de Koonings, et al. Through March 23. (Art et Industrie, 52 Thompson St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Fazal Sheikh: A Sense of Common Ground," portraits of Sudanese, Ethiopian, Somalian, Rwandan, and Mozambican refugees. Through March 31. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Intimate Nature: Ansel Adams and the Close View." Closeups that complement the artist's panoramic visions. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "Country Beside Itself," Lars Tunbjörk's colorful, idiosyncratic exploration of Sweden's changing commercial and leisure pursuits. Through March 22. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**robert adams,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through March 23. . . . **miles coolidge,** Caplan, 580 Broadway. Through March 16. . . . **jed devine,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through April 13. . . . **macduff everton,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **janine gordon,** Gibson, 568 Broadway. Through March 9. . . . **torkil gudnason,** Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway. Through March 16. . . . **dennis hopper,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. Through March 16. . . . **craigie horsfield,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. Through March 16. . . . **ray k. metzker** and **thomas barrow,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through April 13. . . . **sheila metzner** and **judith joy ross,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through April 6. . . . **catherine opie,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through March 30. . . . **stephen prina,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through March 30. . . . **thomas ruff,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. Through March 9. . . . **leeanne schmidt,** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through March 23. . . . **bianca sforni,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. Through March 9.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and El Museo del Barrio.)

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

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OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**madama butterfly,** with Diana Soviero, Wendy White, Richard Leech, and Juan Pons; conducted by Julius Rudel. (March 6 at 8 and March 9 at 1:30.) . . . **salome,** with Catherine Malfitano, Hanna Schwarz, Kenneth Riegel, and Bernd Weikl; Donald Runnicles. (March 7 and March 11 at 8:30.) . . . **la forza del destino,** with Sharon Sweet, Gloria Scalchi, Plácido Domingo, Vladimir Chernov, and Roberto Scandiuzzi; James Levine. (March 8 and March 12 at 8.) . . . **così fan tutte,** with Carol Vaness, Susanne Mentzer, Cecilia Bartoli, Paul Groves, Dwayne Croft, and Richard Stilwell; Mr. Levine. (March 9 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**la bohème.** (March 7 at 8 and March 10 at 1:30.) . . . **the mikado.** (March 8 at 8.) . . . **la traviata.** (March 9 at 1:30.) . . . **der rosenkavalier,** in the opening performances of a new production, with sopranos Elizabeth Holleque and Nancy Allen Lundy, mezzo-soprano Gwendolyn Jones, and baritone Kenneth Cox. (March 9 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Even though Evelyn Glennie lost her hearing by the age of ten, she went on to become the most eminent solo percussionist in the classical-music world. Granted, she had already begun to master her instruments before the gradual, mysterious onset of her deafness, and the percussion family includes the most tactile of the instruments; still, her musicianship is exquisite: it's no surprise that such eminent musicians as Georg Solti and Murray Perahia have collaborated with her or that leading composers have written works for her. In these concerts, she will be the soloist in "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel," a concerto composed for her in 1992 by her fellow-Scot James MacMillan. Also on the program are Strauss's Wind Serenade (Op. 7), Chabrier's "Suite Pastorale" (his own orchestral arrangement of four movements from his piano suite "Pièces Pittoresques"), Satie's "Gymnopédies" No. 1 and No. 3 (in Debussy's orchestrations), and Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé" Suite No. 2. Leonard Slatkin conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 7 at 8, March 8 at 2, and March 12 at 7:30.)

"The Creation"—Haydn's oratorio, with Johannes Somary directing the Amor Artis Classical Orchestra (playing period instruments), the Horace Mann Chorus, and soloists Susanne Peck (soprano), Patrick Romano (tenor), and Paul Shipper (bass). (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. March 7 at 8.)

Toronto Symphony Orchestra—Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducts Jean Sibelius's final two symphonies, the Sixth (1923) and the Seventh (1924), contiguous works in which the composer offers differing solutions in his investigations of structural problems. The four movements of the Sixth impart an overwhelming sense of languor, while its more vital successor compresses all of its episodes into a single movement (which commentators have variously divided into three, four, or five main sections). The former has some odd passages, one so strange that it prompted Benjamin Britten to remark, "I think he must have been drunk when he wrote that." In fact, alcohol did soon become a debilitating problem for Sibelius, who completed his last composition in 1929 and produced no new works in the remaining twenty-seven years of his life. Also on the program is Beethoven's Violin Concerto, with Frank Peter Zimmermann. (Carnegie Hall. March 9 at 8.)

Israel Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra—Up-and-comers of the Israeli musical scene perform in the first of two weekends celebrating the three-thousandth anniversary of King David's establishment of Jerusalem as the nation's capital. (The precise date is May 16; apparently somebody has been keeping diligent count.) (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. March 10 at noon.)

Met Orchestra—The Metropolitan Opera's hard-working pit band moves up to stage level and a few blocks southeast to play Mozart's Symphony No. 38 (the "Prague"), Cage's "Atlas Eclipticalis," Wagner's "Wesendonck Lieder" (with soprano Jessye Norman), and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5. James Levine conducts. (Carnegie Hall. March 10 at 3.)

Musica Viva—Walter Klauss directs the chorus and orchestra in Vaughan Williams's "Serenade to Music" and "An Oxford Elegy" (the latter featuring Schuyler Chapin as narrator), in addition to works by Bach and Shostakovich. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. March 10 at 7. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Young Concert Artists spotlights four of the musicians it supports: violist Nokuthula Ngwenyama (playing a Handel concerto), marimbist Makoto Nakura (in a concerto by Creston), violinist Scott St. John (performing Lalo's "Symphonie Espagnole"), and composer Dan Coleman (with the première of his "Garlands"). Lawrence Leighton Smith conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 12 at 8.)

RECITALS

Musique de Chambre—When the First World War erupted, in 1914, Debussy, already ill with cancer, grew severely depressed. The following summer he fled shell-shocked Paris for the Norman village of Pourville, where he determined to show his patriotism by composing a series of six sonatas, each for a different instrumental combination, that would exemplify the traditionally French musical values of precision, grace, and clarity. He completed only three—the First (for cello and piano) and the Second (for flute, viola, and harp) in 1915; the Third (for violin

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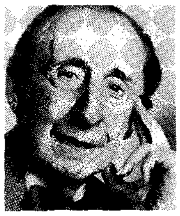

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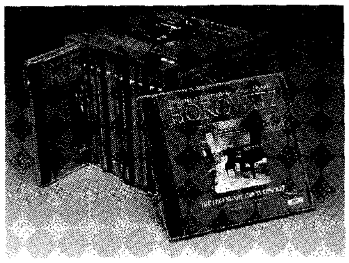

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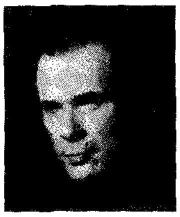

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and piano) two years later, within months of his death—and boldly signed each one "*Claude Debussy, musicien français.*" On this program, several distinguished practitioners (including pianist John Browning) offer the three sonatas and Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet. (92nd Street Y. March 5-6 at 8.)

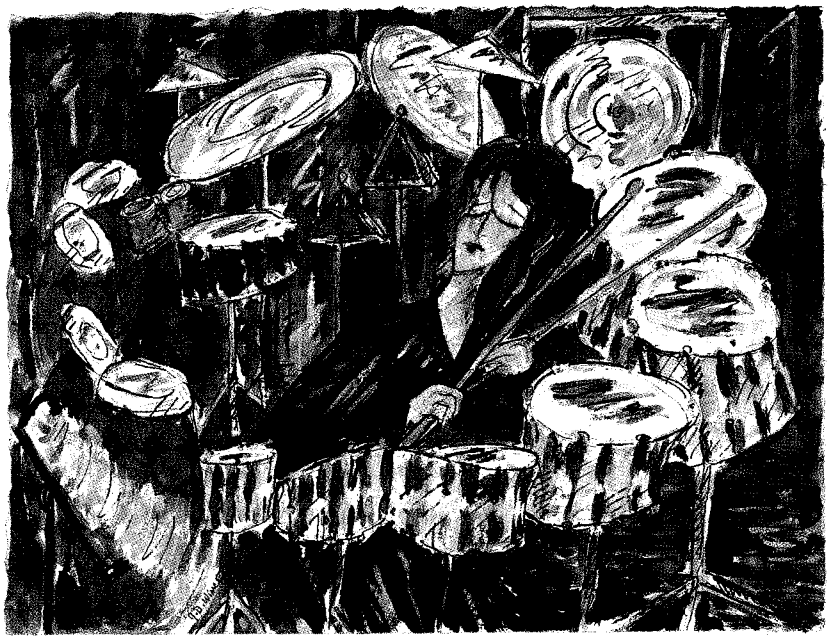
Leonidas Kavakos—Violinist, performing sonatas by Beethoven (in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2), Respighi, and Bartók, as well as Ravel's "Tzigane"; with pianist Peter Nagy. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. March 6 at 8.)

Davide Franceschetti—In his New York début recital, the winner of the 1994 Dublin International Piano Competition performs Schumann's "Fantasiestücke" (Op. 111), Brahms's "Variations on a Theme by Paganini" (both books), and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 6 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—March 7 at 6:45: An hour-long recital given over to Schubert's C-Major String Quintet, performed by the Brentano String Quartet and cellist Gary Hoffman. (Rose Studio, Rose Building, Lincoln Center.) . . . ¶ March 10 at 11 A.M.: A "family concert" with the Miami String Quartet, pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, and many other musicians, focussing on music by Alvin Singleton, Bruce Adolphe, and Gershwin. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. For information about tickets for either event, call 875-5788.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Mark Peskanov and pianist Rita Sloan perform sonatas by Bach, Beethoven, and Franck; Ms. Sloan also offers the piano sonata written by Gideon Klein in 1943, while he was imprisoned in the Terezin concentration camp. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 7 at 7:30 and March 10 at 4.)

Carmina String Quartet—The Zurich-based foursome plays quartets by Debussy and Schubert (in D Minor, the "Death and the Maiden"), as well as "Feuillages," by the Swiss composer Rolf Urs Ringger. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 7 at 8.)



Evelyn Glennie, performing with the New York Philharmonic.

JESSICA DARYL WINER

Paula Robison—The flutist is featured in concertos by Boismortier, Telemann, Bach, and Vivaldi. (Temple of Dendur, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 570-3949. March 8-9 at 7.)

Maurizio Pollini—The pianist continues his survey of Beethoven's sonatas with a passel from the composer's middle period: the Sonatas in F Major (Op. 54), F Minor (Op. 57, the "Appassionata"), F-Sharp Major (Op. 78), G Major (Op. 79), and E-Flat Major (Op. 81a, "Les Adieux"). (Carnegie Hall. March 8 at 7:30. The remaining concerts will take place on March 17 and March 23.) . . . **Note:** The autograph manuscript of the "Les Adieux" Sonata is among the many treasures of Beethoveniana on display through May 27 in Carnegie Hall's Rose Museum. Concertgoers can reach the museum from the hall's first-tier level; the general public may enter at 154 W. 57th St. . . . **Note, too:** On March 8-9, Carnegie Hall hosts a symposium about Beethoven's piano sonatas; visiting scholars include Joseph Kerman, Lewis Lockwood, Maynard Solomon, and William Rothstein. For information about registration, call 903-9670.

Nancy Allen—Harpist, in works by, or transcriptions from, Bach, Marcel Tournier, Salzedo, Debussy, and others; with the assistance of her sister Barbara Allen, also a harpist. (Weill Recital Hall. March 8 at 8.)

New York Festival of Song—An evening of Spanish and Latin American theatre music. (92nd Street Y. March 9 at 8.)

James Galway—The flutist performs Schubert's "Introduction and Variations on 'Trockne Blumen'" and his own transcription of Fauré's A-Major Violin Sonata, in addition to music by Charles Marie Widor, Giulio Briccialdi, and Franz Doppler; with pianist Phillip Moll. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 10 at 3.)

International Hindemith Viola Festival—In the concluding concert of an all-Hindemith series, violist Samuel Rhodes of the Juilliard String Quartet performs in solo and chamber works. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 10 at 3.)

Vladimir Feltsman—The pianist interprets Bach's "The Art of Fugue." (92nd Street Y. March 10 at 3.)

Nancy Argenta—The Canadian soprano performs songs by Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Chabrier, among others; with pianist Eugene Asti. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 11 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Juliette Kang—Violinist, playing Beethoven's G-Major Sonata (Op. 96), Corigliano's Sonata, and works by Schubert, Lutoslawski, and Sarasate; with pianist Melvin Chen. (Carnegie Hall. March 11 at 8.)

Bella Davidovich—The pianist performs Schumann's late "Fantasiestücke" (Op. 111) and his "Kreisleriana" (Op. 16), as well as Chopin's four impromptus, "Berceuse," and "Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante." (Carnegie Hall. March 12 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Topless Topics—Writer Lily Burana covers the cash-flow shortfalls of her trade by picking up the occasional shift as a stripper. At a discussion called "Strip Tease: Art, Pornography, and the Wages of Skin," Burana, one of the leading plaintiffs in a recent class-action suit to eliminate stage fees for strippers, presents the current view from the runway. "It's a taxi job," she says, "for most of us—ninety per cent of the women I've worked with are on their way to something else." Joining her on the dais are John Stoltenberg, the author of "Refusing to Be a Man" ("a sensitive-guy rescue type," according to Burana); Joan Torino, a burlesque artist who worked in Union City, New Jersey, in the fifties ("she's going to be more go-go ya-ya"); and Tracy C. Davis, a theatre professor from Northwestern. "I'll be the tacky blonde," Burana says. "Look, if you want to do the work, you got to have the hair." (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. 870-1630. March 7 at 6:30.)

Waiting to Inhale—For temporary relief of spring fever, consider a visit to the Rare Pit and Plant Council, or the Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society, or, perhaps, the American Begonia Society (Knickerbocker Branch), all of which will be cultivating gardens at the New York Flower Show. For more pernicious agues, consult Jon Carloftis, of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who will stock his garden—one of the largest of the hundred-and-fifty-odd plots—with more than four hundred cultivars of medicinal, aromatic, culinary, and ornamental herbs. "Just in scented geraniums alone," he says, "I'll have rose, lemon, lime, orange, peppermint, nutmeg, strawberry. . ." (Coliseum, Columbus Circle. March 8, from noon to 9, and March 9-12, from 10 to 7. Through March 17. For more information, call 1-800 553-2121.)

Readings—March 7 at 6:30: Short-story writer Andre Dubus reads from his new collection, "Dancing After Hours." (Rizzoli, 454 West Broadway. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 8 at 5: Poets and writers gather for music and readings honoring the late Joseph Brodsky. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St.) . . . ¶ March 8 at 7: Poet Martín Espada ("Rebellion Is the Circle of a Lover's Hands") reads translations from the work of Pablo Neruda. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. 431-7920.) . . . ¶ March 9 at 7: Accompanied by improvisational guitarist Olu Dara, playwright August Wilson reads from his latest play, "Seven Guitars." (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424.) . . . ¶ March 11 at 7:30: Poet Vijay Seshadri reads from his first collection, "Wild Kingdom." Susan Sontag also reads. (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 12 at 7: Stephen McCauley reads from his third novel, "The Man of the House." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—March 6 at 6:30: Asian-medicine practitioner Eliot Tokar, a protégé of Dr. Trogawa Rimpoche (the last teacher from a medical school established in Lhasa in 1696 by the fifth Dalai Lama), talks about choosing health care from the Tibetan Buddhist perspective. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.) . . . ¶ March 7 at 8:15: *The New Yorker's* Jane Kramer, BAM impresario Harvey Lichtenstein, former *Times* Paris bureau chief John Rockwell, and *Times* dance critic Anna Kisselgoff debate the current health of the arts in France. (Jurow Hall, N.Y.U., 100 Washington Square E., at Waverly Pl. 998-8750.) . . . ¶ March 9 at 2: Food writers trade fish stories—cod pieces, as it were—in conjunction with the South Street Seaport exhibition "When Cod Was King": Peter Rose offers recipes from the Dutch Colonial era; Jessica Harris brings African-American ones; and Colman Andrews speaks on behalf of dried cod, or stockfish, in Mediterranean cuisine. (Low Gallery, 171 John St. For reservations, call 748-8590.)

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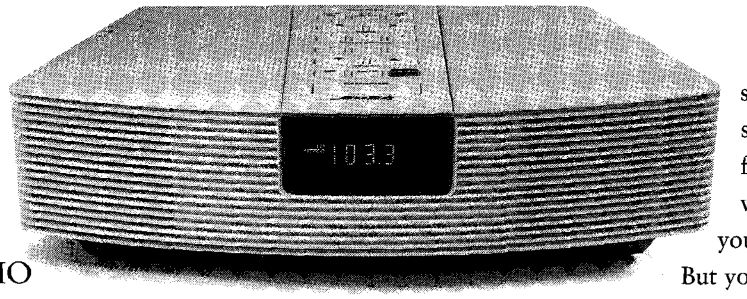

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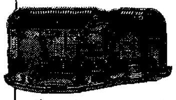

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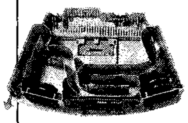

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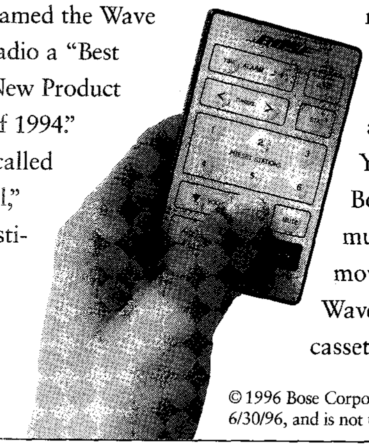

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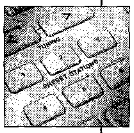

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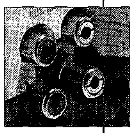

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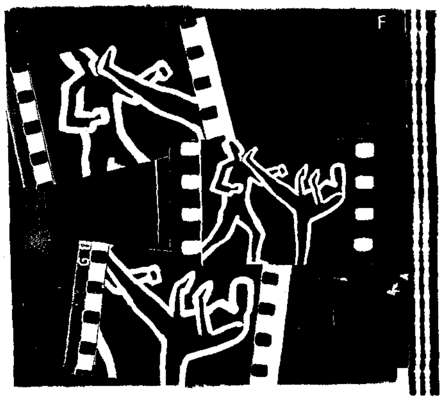


THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Birdcage—Mike Nichols' American remake of "La Cage aux Folles" stars Robin Williams, Nathan Lane, Gene Hackman, and Dianne Wiest. Elaine May wrote the script. Opening March 8. (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Chungking Express—A comedy, written and directed by Wong Kar-Wai, about two Hong Kong policemen and their love affairs. In Cantonese and Mandarin. Opening March 8. (Angelika Film Center.)

Fargo—In order to settle his debts, an automobile salesman has his wife kidnapped, in a drama directed by Joel Coen, who co-wrote the screenplay with Ethan Coen. With William H. Macy, Steve Buscemi, and Frances McDormand. Opening March 8. (19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

The Flower of My Secret—Pedro Almodóvar's latest comedy, in which a newspaper editor (Juan Echanove) unwittingly hires a romance novelist (Marisa Paredes), who writes under a pseudonym, to review her own books. In Spanish. Opening March 8. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Hellraiser: Bloodline—Doug Bradley plays Pinhead once again, in a continuation of the horror series created by Clive Barker. Directed by Kevin Yagher. Opening March 8.

Homeward Bound II: Lost in San Francisco—A Himalayan cat and a golden retriever set out to rescue their friend, a bulldog, in a family adventure directed by David R. Ellis. Opening March 8. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 2.)

If Lucy Fell—Eric Schaeffer stars with Sarah Jessica Parker in a romantic comedy he wrote and directed, about two friends who pledge to leap off the Brooklyn Bridge if they don't find true love before they're thirty. With Elle Macpherson and Ben Stiller. Opening March 8. (Village Theatre VII, Gemini, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Man of the Year—Dirk Shafer's comic account of his reign as *Playgirl's* Man of the Year, a position that kept him deep in the closet during 1992. Opening March 8. (Quad Cinema.)

The Star Maker—A Roman con man (Sergio Castellitto) travels through Sicily posing as a movie-studio talent scout, in a drama directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. In Italian. Opening March 8. (Paris.)

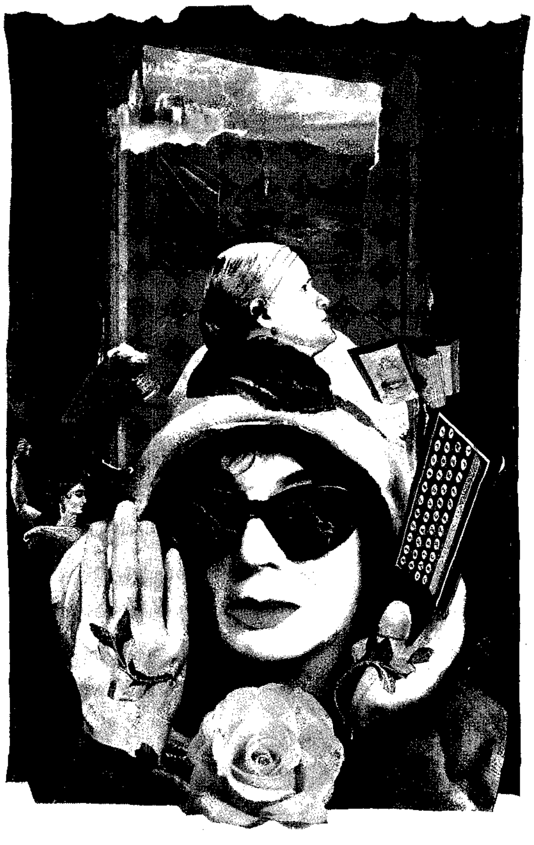
CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 36.)

Angels & Insects—This film, based on an A. S. Byatt neo-Victorian novella, is flatly directed by Philip Haas, but at least the performances are handsomely framed. Patsy Kensit plays an aristocrat who lives on her looks, Kristin Scott Thomas a poor relation; they share an interest in the same man, a naturalist played by Mark Rylance. Actingwise, it's no contest: Scott Thomas turns in a beautiful portrait of poise, yearning, and sublimation.—J.W. (1/29/96) (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Anne Frank Remembered—Jon Blair's documentary includes interviews with Holocaust survivors and footage of Otto Frank, Anne's father, who died in 1980. Kenneth Branagh narrates. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Beautiful Girls—Timothy Hutton goes home for his ten-year high-school reunion and hooks up with his old friends Matt Dillon, Michael Rappaport, and Noah Emmerich. Imagine "Diner" crossed with "The Big Chill"—except that this one is about confused Generation Xers, so instead of trying to hang onto youth these guys are still trying to get over it. It's too long by half an hour, and the director, Ted Demme, can't hold onto a rhythm, but the actors are uniformly sharp, and so are the actresses: Mira Sorvino, Uma Thurman, Lauren Holly, and Rosie O'Donnell. Written by Scott Rosenberg.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center, Sutton, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 4.)



Marisa Paredes in "The Flower of My Secret."

KARI KROLL

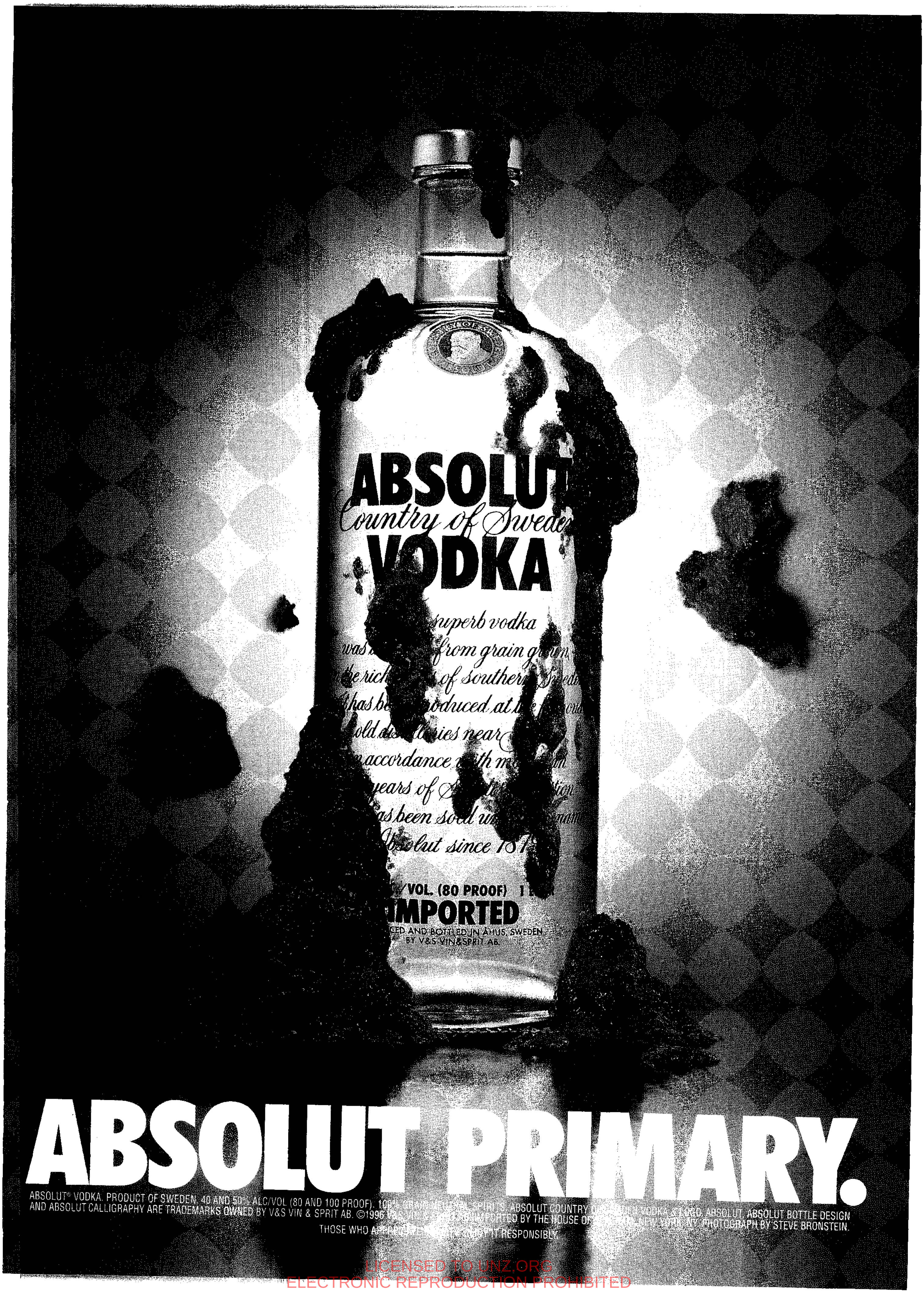
Before and After—Rosellen Brown's 1992 novel, about an artist and a doctor whose teen-age son is suspected of bludgeoning his girlfriend to death, deals with the universal question of how far parents should go to shield their children from the law. Unfortunately, the screen adaptation stars Liam Neeson as the artist, Meryl Streep as the doctor, and Edward Furlong as the son. They're three of the most self-conscious performers around, and their work together smells of acting class. The overwrought, pedestrian script, by Ted Tally, is no help. Also starring Alfred Molina. Directed, with no discernable style, by Barbet Schroeder.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Broken Arrow—In John Woo's new movie, John Travolta plays a disgruntled Air Force pilot who hijacks a couple of nuclear warheads. This is not, however, a standard-issue doomsday thriller, but a spectacularly nutty and entertaining chase picture: like "North by Northwest," it wants to cover as much ground, in as many different ways, as it possibly can, and it's disarmingly aware of its own absurdity. Woo—who is best known for his delirious Hong Kong gangster movies—tosses off risky stunts and eye-popping effects like one-liners, with a rapid-fire rhythm that lets us know that he's got a million of 'em. The hero and the heroine, played by Christian Slater and Samantha Mathis, are likable, but in a Woo picture the character to watch is invariably the chain-smoking guy in shades. Here that guy is Travolta, who brings a refreshingly all-American exuberance to action-movie villainy. Also with Delroy Lindo, Howie Long, Kurtwood Smith, and Frank Whaley. Screenplay by Graham Yost (who also wrote "Speed").—T.R. (2/19/96) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

City Hall—Harold Becker's ambitious political melodrama has dozens of characters and locations, four screenwriters (Ken Lipper, Paul Schrader, Nicholas Pileggi, and Bo Goldman), and at least three different ideas about what kind of story it's telling. The overall aim is to plunge the viewer into the chaos of municipal government, but the movie, like the New York City it portrays, never quite manages to satisfy all the conflicting interests that tug at it. The picture's first half, which sets up the elaborate thriller machinery, is speedy, clever, and absorbing; the diffuse second half feels like the betrayal of a campaign promise. Al Pacino (as the mayor), John Cusack (as an idealistic deputy mayor), and Danny Aiello (as a corrupt Brooklyn political boss) have the meatiest roles; the supporting cast is filled with terrific actors—notably Bridget Fonda, David Paymer, and Martin Landau—who have almost nothing to do.—T.R. (2/19/96) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Dead Man Walking—Tim Robbins's blunt, powerful movie tells the story of a murderer (Sean Penn) awaiting execution and a nun (Susan Sarandon) trying to save his soul—and, if possible, his skin. The filmmaker clearly hopes that familiarity with the grisly realities of capital punishment will finally breed contempt for the idea of premeditated, state-sponsored killing. And although the picture sometimes turns clunky and flat, as if it were sagging under the weight of its good intentions, it winds up being devastatingly effective. Penn has to reveal, within a reckless and apparently despicable character, a salvageable soul, and he makes the erratic rhythm of the condemned man's spiritual progress seem effortless and natural: he captures the languid, insinuating tempo of grace invading a locked-up spirit.—T.R. (1/8/96) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Down Periscope—A comedy directed by David S. Ward, about a submarine captain (Kelsey Grammer) and his ragtag crew (which includes Lauren Holly). (Village East Cinemas,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Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

From the Journals of Jean Seberg—Mary Beth Hurt has the title role in a drama about the life of the Iowa-born actress who died in 1979 at the age of forty. Written and directed by Mark Rappaport. (Cinema Village.)

Happy Gilmore—A comedy written by Adam Sandler and Tim Herlihy, in which Sandler stars as a hockey player turned golf pro. Directed by Dennis Dugan. (Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square.)

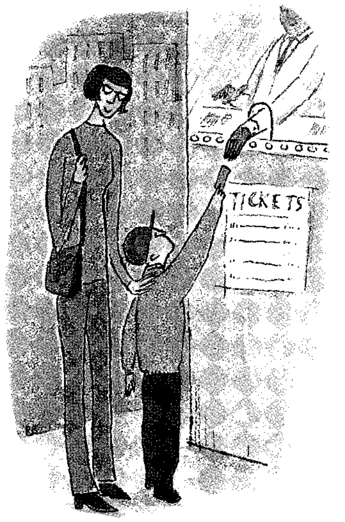
Hate (La Haine)—This black-and-white French film, directed by Mathieu Kassovitz, is meant to be an urgent fax from the front lines of urban unrest—a political flyer spat out in cinéma vérité. Covering twenty-four hours in a multiracial housing project on the outskirts of Paris rocked by rioting and looting, it tracks an Arab (Said Taghmaoui), a Jew (Vincent Cassel), and a black (Hubert Kounde) as they argue, scrounge, and scuffle with the police. Kassovitz directs like an honorary soul brother of Spike Lee, the Hughes brothers, John Singleton, and Matty Rich, pausing for static vignettes that look like Jim Jarmusch postcards from Nowheresville. Sincere and intense, "Hate" ends up scrambling its own signal. It's a message movie with too many other people's messages. In French.—J.W. (Village Theatre VII and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Lamerica—A drama by Gianni Amelio, about an Italian con man in post-Communist Albania. In Italian. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Mary Reilly—John Malkovich plays Dr. Jekyll, the kindly man of science, and his brutish alter ego, Mr. Hyde, and Julia Roberts plays a wide-eyed Irish housemaid who is, it seems, attracted to both of her employer's personalities. The movie—directed by Stephen Frears, from a screenplay by Christopher Hampton—is solemn, brooding, and lifeless. Frears and his superb cinematographer, Philippe Rousselot, establish a dark, portentous visual mood, but the script stubbornly refuses to deliver the horror-movie payoffs that it promises. And the director, whose temperament is essentially ironic, doesn't bring much conviction to the romantic elements of the drama. This is, unfortunately, one of those genre pictures in which subtext has been promoted to text and vulgar narrative has been sent downstairs to the servants' quarters. Instead of revealing, as Robert Louis Stevenson's original story did, the bestial impulses repressed by Victorian respectability, the movie attempts to release the literary soul pent up within the crude, vigorous form of horror fiction, and the experiment backfires: the high-toned metaphor runs amok and kills the audience's pleasure. Also with George Cole and Michael Gambon. Based on a novel by Valerie Martin.—T.R. (Village East Cinemas, Gemini, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Mighty Aphrodite—Woody Allen stars in his latest picture as Lenny, a New York sportswriter bored by his wife (Helena Bonham Carter) and attracted to a hooker (Mira Sorvino) who happens to be the mother—though she doesn't know it—of his adopted son. The movie treads enjoyably over old ground, though rather than cruising along with the ease of Allen's best work it tends to hobble, and it closes in a flurry of undecided endings. Sorvino's comic momentum rescues it. She offers the alarming prospect of sexual comedy without neurosis; you don't see *that* too often in a Woody Allen film.—A.L. (10/30/95) (68th St. Playhouse and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



ROXANNA BIKADOROFF

Muppet Treasure Island—Brian Henson takes over his late father's franchise and runs it aground in this listless adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's pirate adventure. Although Kermit, Miss Piggy, and the rest of America's most popular puppet troupe interact with some clever performers (Jennifer Saunders, Kevin Bishop), the comedy never gels. Only Tim Curry, as Long John Silver, his eyebrows raised like sabres, manages to bring some energy to his role.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Embassy 3; through March 7.)

The Neon Bible—The British director Terence Davies's two previous movies, "Distant Voices, Still Lives" and "The Long Day Closes," were beautiful, poetic fictions that drew heavily on his childhood in Liverpool in the forties. His new film is adapted from a lackluster early novel by John Kennedy Toole and set in the American South. Davies's technique—the gracious camera work, the slow dissolves, the gorgeous use of pop music—is still impeccable, but though he creates an atmosphere of emotional expectation he provides no epiphany. The film, dark and drowsy, never really wakes up.—B.D. (Quad Cinema.)

Once Upon a Time . . . When We Were Colored—Tim Reid's adaptation of the 1989 book by Clifton Taulbert, about growing up in Mississippi in the forties and fifties, stars Al Freeman, Jr., Phylicia Rashad, and Leon. Written by Paul W. Cooper. (Manhattan Twin.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," on which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda on Isla Negra, the corner of Chile where the poet spent much of his later life. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Rumble in the Bronx—The Hong Kong superstar Jackie Chan may be the greatest physical performer in action movies today—his fluid movements, breathtaking stunts, and comically choreographed fights display a grace and skill that rival Buster Keaton's. If his new American film, about stolen diamonds and the mob, lacks the inspired lunacy of his Hong Kong classics ("Drunken Master," "Police Story"), it's still fine as a ninety-minute Jackie Chan primer. Breaking an ankle during filming (he wears a cast painted as a sneaker) probably put a crimp in his artistry. The movie is disjointed and, at times, unintentionally funny, but its ineptitude is so good-natured that it makes for a charming alternative to the mind-numbing professionalism of American action movies. And, while almost all of the actors are bad (they appear to have been cast mainly for how well their flying bodies can destroy the furniture), Chan has the beautiful, eager confidence of a movie star who loves his work. Directed by Stanley Tong.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Sense and Sensibility—The director, Ang Lee, and the screenwriter, Emma Thompson, turn Jane Austen's first published novel into a gracious and unfailingly pleasant entertainment. Thompson also plays the very sensible heroine, Elinor Dashwood, and carries the movie without overwhelming her fellow-actors. (Alan Rickman and Kate Winslet are especially good; the only clinker is a grotesquely mannered performance by Hugh Grant as Elinor's suitor.) If the picture pressed its temperate charms on us any harder, they would be much easier to resist.—T.R. (12/18/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Coronet; through March 7.)

Unforgettable—Director John Dahl's first big studio project after two cool low-budget movies ("Red Rock West" and "The Last Seduction") is a silly "Outer Limits"-type picture about a man who injects a serum that allows him to experience a dead person's memories. Ray Liotta plays the man, who's on the trail of his wife's killer with the help of the woman who developed the drug. The film has some buzz to it, and it unfolds briskly, but Linda Fiorentino is miscast as the quiet scientist—she's too commanding to play a sidekick, and the script gives her too little to do. Still, Liotta's slightly wacky desperation to get at the truth is compelling, and, though Bill Geddie's script is hackwork, Dahl finds a good rhythm with which to tell his tale.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through March 7.)

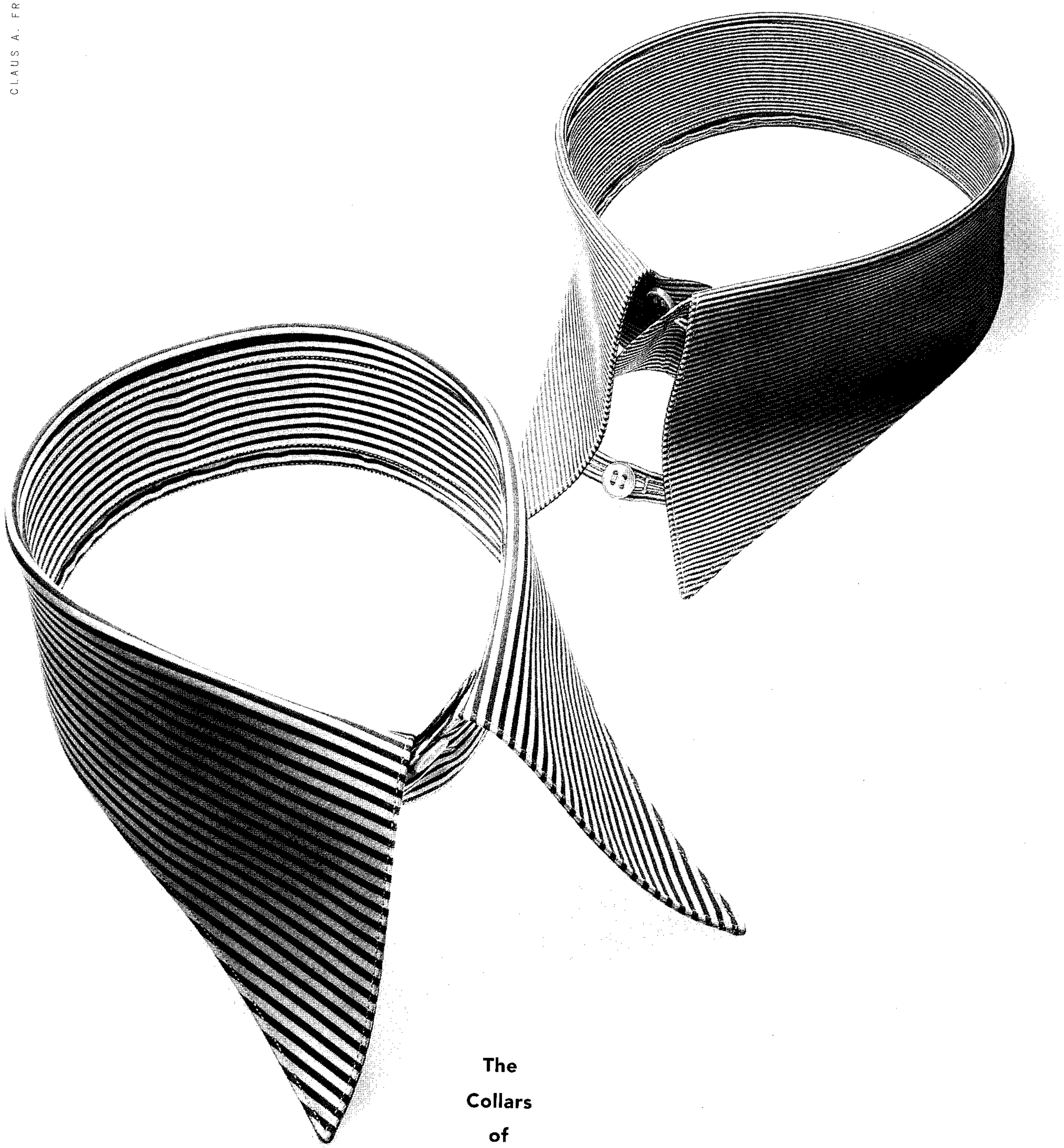
Up Close and Personal—Michelle Pfeiffer plays an aspiring television newswoman and Robert Redford her mentor, in a romantic drama directed by Jon Avnet. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

The Young Poisoner's Handbook—In telling the true story of a fourteen-year-old English boy who poisoned his family, Benjamin Ross's début feature sets up a cartoonish, stylized household and then, bit by bit, humanizes its members' sufferings at the hands of the young psychopath. Unfortunately, the rest of the movie is either locked in a hospital for the criminally insane, during the boy's dreary rehabilitation, or confined to the drab workplace where, after his parole, he returns to his evil-toxicologist ways. It's well directed and sincerely acted (Hugh O'Conor, who plays the boy, uses his wide-eyed elfin stare to great coldhearted effect), but the screenplay doesn't maintain the dark, discomfiting humor it strives for, and the drama becomes as dispassionate as its antihero's emotionless narration.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

ACROSS THE SEA OF TIME: Lincoln Square. . . . **ANTONIA'S LINE:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **APOLLO 13** *(reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95)*: 59th Street East Cinemas. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Manhattan Twin. . . . **BOTTLE ROCKET:** Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square. . . . **BRAVEHEART** (6/5/95): New York Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Astor Plaza. . . . **CASINO** (12/4/95): National Twin. . . . **THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **DUNSTON CHECKS IN:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FRENCH TWIST** (1/15/96): Quad Cinema. . . . **GEORGIA** (12/11/95): Waverly. . . . **GET SHORTY** (10/23/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **GOLDENEYE** (11/27/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR:** Angelika 57. . . . **HEAT** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Criterion Center. . . . **HEAVY METAL:**

CLAUS A. FROH



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Criterion Center. . . . **THE JUROR** (2/12/96): Orpheum VII and Criterion Center. . . . **LAST SUMMER IN THE HAMPTONS:** Angelika 57. . . . **A MIDWINTER'S TALE** (2/12/96): Cinema 3rd Avenue. . . . **MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS** (1/29/96): Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, and Lincoln Square. . . . **NICO ICON:** Film Forum. . . . **NUEBA YOL:** Embassy 3. . . . **OTHELLO** (12/18/95): Paris. . . . **PERSUASION** (9/25/95): Cinema 3. . . . **RESTORATION:** Gemini and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **RICHARD III** (1/22/96): 34th St. East, Art Greenwich Twin, and Metro Cinema. . . . **SABRINA** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **SEVEN:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **SHANGHAI TRIAD:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TARGET:** Film Forum. . . . **TAXI DRIVER:** Film Forum. . . . **THINGS TO DO IN DENVER WHEN YOU'RE DEAD:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **12 MONKEYS** (1/22/96): 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **THE USUAL SUSPECTS** (8/14/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE WHITE BALLOON:** Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini 1 and 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
Tower East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Decalogue—Another dose of fun from Krzysztof Kieślowski (whose recent "Three Colors" trilogy—"Blue," "White," and "Red"—drew acclaim here): ten hours of cancer, abortion, incest, strangulation, and the thwarting of brotherly love, mostly set amid the rainy projects of an oppressed Polish town. This earlier series was made for Polish television in 1988, when the nation was still under martial law, and comprises ten hour-long films, each devoted to one of the Ten Commandments. Given those factors, the whole endeavor could have collapsed into rusty political parable, but, though Kieślowski's subjects are often parodies of gloom, he picks his way through them with a gathering delicacy and a frowning ironic wit. Anyone who associates art films with monotonous meditation will be surprised to find these movies so packed with *stuff;* the director doesn't shy away from murder, car chases, or fine-boned blondes, or from the Hollywood hook of a mysterious letter that warns, "To be opened after my death . . ." The best of the ten is No. 5, "Thou Shalt Not Kill" (it also exists in a full-length version titled "A Short Film About Killing"): if you thought "Dead Man Walking" screwed you into the clutches of the capital-punishment debate, try the pincer grip of this picture, which derives not so much from a forceful argument as from an overwhelming flourish of style. Kieślowski filters his skies to the color of a bruise, as if fate were bearing down from the heavens; he spies shards of beauty in the rubble of crummy lives, and seems wholly at ease with the random possibility of miracles. The films are being shown in five double bills. Thou shalt not miss. In Polish.—A.L. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 8-14.)

Ninotchka (1939)—"Garbo Laughs," said the original ads, but there is by now a widespread story that when the time came for her laughing scene she pantomimed laughter beautifully, but no sound emerged; it was later provided by someone anonymous. The rest of her performance is her own—and she brings her incredible sensual abandon to the role of a glum, scientifically trained Bolshevik envoy who succumbs to Parisian freedom—i.e., champagne. The film includes a historic encounter, when the great instinctual artist of the screen meets the great stylist and technician of the stage—Ina Claire, as a Russian grand duchess. The fur flies exquisitely. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch, this light, satirical comedy has the nonchalance and the sophistication that were his trademark—but it also reveals that this time the trade marked him too high. There's an obviousness here; we can feel that we're being played down to. And there's a jeering cynicism built into the script: the Russians don't defect for freedom but for consumer goods. With Melvyn Douglas, Sig Rumann, Felix Bressart, Bela Lugosi, Alexander Granach, George Tobias, and Edwin Maxwell. Screenplay by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder, and Walter Reisch, from a screen story by Melchior Lengyel.—P.K. (Symphony Space; March 12.)

Park Row (1952)—Sam Fuller famously proclaimed, in Godard's "Pierrot le Fou," that film is "like a battleground: love, hate, action, violence, death . . . in a word, emotion." But he has also said that film is "potentially the greatest educational medium," and this odd, angular movie about an 1886 New York newspaper war illustrates what he meant—it marries journalistic lore to the dime novel. Fuller stirs Steve Brodie's legendary jump off the Brooklyn Bridge, the funding of the Statue of Liberty, and the creation of the Linotype machine into the eighty-three-minute story of the fighting editor (Gene Evans) of an upstart journal. It's purest melodrama: Evans and his team are salt of the asphalt, while their enemies on a big daily are alternately high-handed and underhanded. But Fuller the ex-reporter fills it with so much argot and info (he explains everything from the use of "—30—" at the end of a news story to the derivation of the phrase "off the cuff") and exploits his Old New York set so ingeniously that the result is entertaining and even instructive.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; March 8 and March 10.)

The Steel Helmet (1951)—In this Korean War film, an odd trio—the grizzled Sergeant Zack (Gene Evans), the perky South Korean orphan Short Round (William Chun), and the sober African-American medic Corporal Thompson (James Edwards)—help a relatively green United States outfit defend a Buddhist temple. The writer-director, Sam Fuller, a decorated veteran of the Second World War, stages the action with tense efficiency and grit. But the picture is hardly realistic: it's a lost-patrol movie with an adventure-magazine arsenal of slang ("Eat rice!" for "Hit the dirt!," "Let's make some money!" for "Commence firing!") and gesture (the shot-up headgear of the title becomes a religious artifact). Fuller goes from corn to brutality with low-budget bravura, getting more visual dynamism out of a single pagoda than the spectacle-makers of epics like "55 Days at Peking" and "The Last Emperor" got out of the whole Forbidden City. (Steven Spielberg gave the name Short Round to the youthful sidekick in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.")—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; March 7 and March 11.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through March 7: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, Cybill Shepherd, and Jodie Foster. . . . From March 8: "Who Killed Teddy Bear?" (1965, Joseph Cates), with Sal Mineo, Juliet Prowse, and Elaine Stritch.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—March 7-10 and March 12: Silent films starring Asta Nielsen. With non-English intertitles and live English voice-overs. . . . ¶ Films by Samuel Fuller. March 7 at 2:30 and March 11 at 6: "The Steel Helmet" (†). . . . March 7 at 6 and March 9 at 2: "Pickup on South Street" (1952), with Richard Widmark, Jean Peters, and Thelma Ritter. . . . March 7 at 8: "Forty Guns" (1957), with Barbara Stanwyck and Barry Sullivan. . . . March 8 at 2:30: "Forty Guns" and "I Shot Jesse James" (1949), with Preston Foster. . . . March 8 at 6 and March 11 at 2:30: "Merrill's Marauders" (1962), with Jeff Chandler. . . . March 8 at 8 and March 10 at 2: "Park Row" (†). . . . March 9 at 5: "I Shot Jesse James.". . . March 10 at 5 and March 12 at 2:30: "The Baron of Arizona" (1950), with Vincent Price and Ellen Drew. . . . ¶ March 8 at 8 and March 9 at 2: "Cinema of Tears" (1995, Nelson Pereira dos Santos; in Portuguese and Spanish).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Polish cinema, from 1930 to the present; all films in Polish, with English subtitles. March 6 at 2 and 6 and March 7 at 4: "Pigs" (1992, Wladyslaw Pasikowski). . . . March 6 at 4 and March 7 at 2 and 6:15: "The Miraculous Place" (1993, Jan J. Kolski). . . . March 6-7 at 8:15 and 10: "Crows" (1994, Dorota Kedzierzawska). . . . ¶ Films by Krzysztof Kieślowski. March 8-14: "The Decalogue" (†). . . . March 12 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Blue" (1993; in French). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. March 9-10 at 2: "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" (1968, Ken Hughes).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On March 10 at 7, the feature will be "Springtime in the Rockies" (1942, Irving Cummings).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—March 12 at 7: "Ninotchka" (†). . . . March 12 at 9:15: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 12 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Tea in the Harem" (1985, Medhi Charef; in French and Arabic).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Television work by John Frankenheimer. Through March 10: "Deal a Blow" (1955), with James MacArthur, Macdonald Carey, and Margaret Hayes, and "Forbidden Area" (1956), with Charlton Heston, Tab Hunter, and Vincent Price. . . . From March 12: "Bail Out at Forty-three Thousand" (1955), with Heston, Richard Boone, and Lee Marvin, and "Bomber's Moon" (1958), with Bob Cummings.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—From March 6: "Fate" (1994, Fred Kelemen).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—From March 6: Films by Gregory J. Markopoulos (1928-92).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—March 9-10 at 2: "A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese Through American Movies" (1995, Scorsese and Michael Henry Wilson).

At Symphony Space, Greta Garbo in "Ninotchka."

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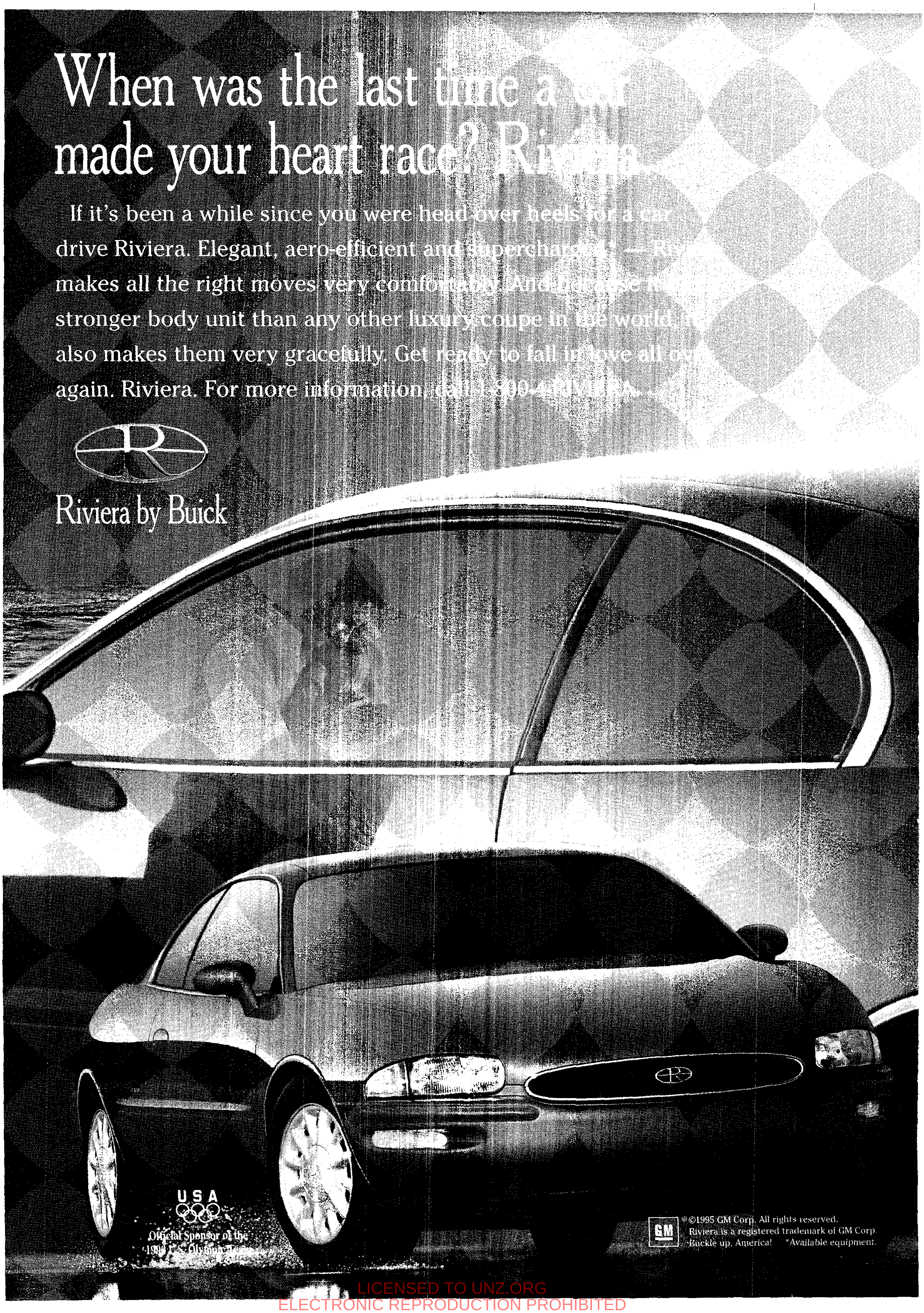

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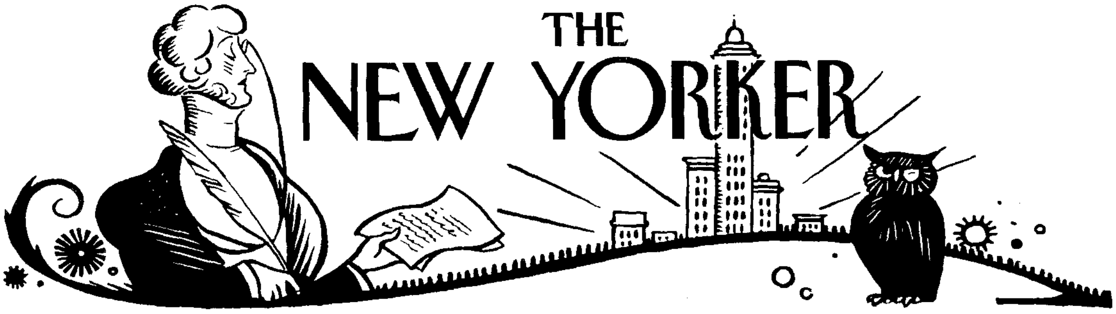


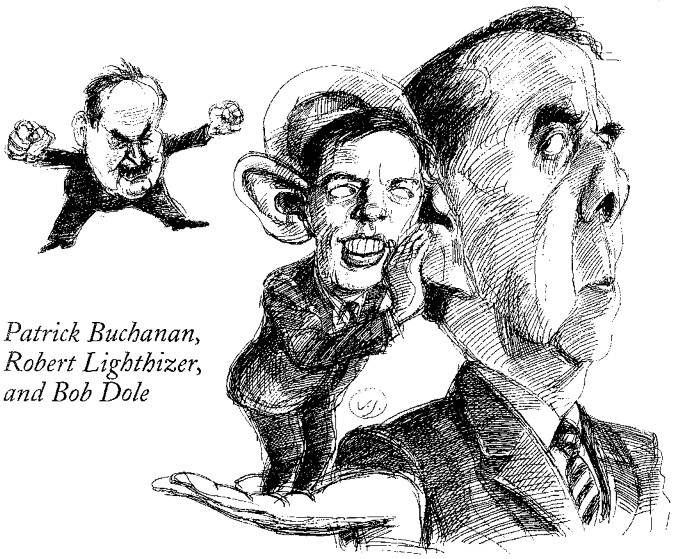
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

BUCHANANIZING BOB DOLE

ROBERT LIGHTHIZER, a seriously powerful Republican trade lawyer with some seriously un-Republican views on economic policy, seemed taken aback by the question. "No, Pat Buchanan doesn't sound crazy to me," he said last December, at a time when much of the political class found Buchanan's protectionist rhetoric, if not loopy, then certainly limited in its electoral appeal. "The idea of putting across-the-board tariffs in place is a little radical, and pulling out of the GATT"—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—"is not a good idea, but his analysis of the problem is, I think, fundamentally right."

For Lighthizer, Buchanan's success has proved a painful way to win an argument. A partner in the Washington office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, Lighthizer also happens to be Bob Dole's campaign treasurer, his friend and adviser of eighteen years, and a leading candidate to be chief of staff in a Dole White House. All last year, the forty-eight-year-old Midwesterner labored, largely in vain, to persuade the campaign to focus on America's economic anxieties. Now, as Buchanan has put those anxieties at the center of the Republican race—and put the fear of God into Dole—Lighthizer has more than Dole's ear. On economics, Lighthizer's voice, however mangled and muffled, often seems to be emanating directly from Dole's mouth.

In recent days, the sound has caused a stir on the true-believing right, which regards Lighthizer with intense suspicion. For one thing, he is wont to talk like a Democrat. On a recent afternoon in his office, Lighthizer managed, in the space of a few minutes, to decry the "growing disparity between rich and poor," and to admit that tax cuts ("Is that part of the solution? Yeah, I guess") are no cure-all for stagnant middle-class incomes. Moreover, in discussing his area of expertise, Lighthizer boisterously rejected the reigning Republican "theology of free trade," declaring himself a "nationalist" and calling for "aggressive" measures against China and Japan that are—well, not all that different from the ones Buchanan plumps for.


Patrick Buchanan, Robert Lighthizer, and Bob Dole

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VICTOR JUHASZ

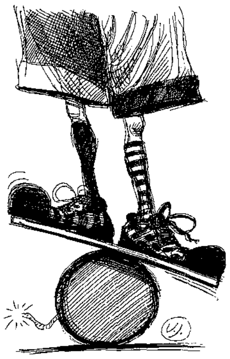
Considering all this, it isn't surprising to learn that Lighthizer has been urging Dole not simply to trash Buchanan but to coöpt bits of his message while condemning his extremism. The strategy surfaced three days before the vote in New Hampshire, when Dole gave a speech arguing that "these are the best of times for many who work on Wall Street" but "the worst of times for many who live and work on Main Street." In the days leading up to Saturday's South Carolina primary, Dole continued to hew to the Lighthizer line, rejecting protectionism while in the next breath calling for retaliation against "unfair" trading partners and casting doubt on the wisdom of NAFTA. Predictably, the true believers have derided this incarnation of "Dolenomics" as, in the words of George Will, "watery Buchananism." But Lighthizer is unfazed. On a prop-plane flight back to Washington from Manchester, he railed at Will and the rest of "the pure-market, free-trade guys, who are in denial or something," saying, "These problems Pat's talking about are real. Not addressing them would be suicide for us."

THE trouble for Dole is that neither his temperament nor his history has prepared him well for this Buchananite moment. For decades, Dole has been the sort of Republican who believes that balanced budgets are the key to prosperity; now he finds himself in a race where the deficit has faded as an issue. For decades, he was a stalwart free trader; now he seems to think it necessary to hedge in order to appear in touch with the insecurities of blue-collar voters. Republicans fear a fall election that, if Dole survives, would pit a President who speaks fluently about the perils and promise of the "new economy" against a candidate who remarked in New Hampshire that he "didn't realize that jobs and trade and what makes America work would become a big issue."

Lighthizer, however, remains confident. "This election is going to be Clinton versus Not Clinton," he said. "That's what it always is when you're running against an incumbent. People are gonna think, Do I want Bob Dole—honest, basic, commonsense, good person, soldier? Or

RIDING THE BOARD OF FEAR

SUPER CHARLIE the clown came to our house in Jerusalem on the day the No. 18 bus was bombed near the convention center. It was a beautiful day, and we were giving a birthday party for a five-year-old. Super Charlie is Australian by birth and lives in the Golan Heights. He moved there recently from Jerusalem because it's in the country. The Golan is disputed territory, and at the end of the peace process it could revert to Syrian control. I asked Charlie if he was ready to become a citizen of Syria, and he laughed. Super Charlie talks mostly to kids; he's not voluble with adults.



Which is just as well, because a number of the parents at the birthday party were journalists, and many had come directly from the site of the bombing. They didn't want to chat; they just wanted to watch Charlie cavort in his red boxer shorts, suspenders, red nose, and Mad Hatter-size red hat, under which he hides a ratty little toupee that flies off to great hilarity among the younger set. Charlie has a little board that sits on a roller, and he balances on the board and spins three paper plates on the ends of three dust mops while wearing a toilet plunger on his head, and it's all very Dr. Seuss-like. He calls the board his Board of Fear. He fell off the Board of Fear a lot, and the audience, including the parents, laughed.

In Jerusalem, it isn't only journalists who go to the site of a bus bombing. Normal people go to witness history and to get a visceral feel for the current political situation. Some go to gawk at body parts. Others go to vent their rage. Religious teams come armed with tweezers to pick up bits of flesh and bone and piece the bodies back together for funerary purposes. After the bombing the other day, about forty people held an anti-peace-process demonstration, and at one point someone yelled "Peres the Engineer!"—referring to the nickname of Yahya Ayyash, the Hamas man who used to organize bus bombings in Israel and was assassinated a month ago, reportedly by the Israelis.

There's nothing like a bus bomb in your home town to get you thinking about the peace process and terror and public transportation. The No. 18 goes all the way across Jerusalem. It is notoriously packed, which is why it was chosen as a target, according to commonly held belief. Jerusalemites like to quote this Yogi Berra-esque motto of life in the sacred city: "It's safe—until it's not." Terrorism scares people, but they still take buses; each bus is a little Israel, and if you're committed to the place there's no other way to go. A new bumper sticker that came out after the attack reads "Which Bus Does Peace Take?"

We heard the bomb go off. The five-year-old who was having the birthday party asked, "Was that a cyclonic boom?" He knows that when an airplane goes faster than the speed of sound, it makes a big noise. We also thought it was a sonic boom, because the Israeli Air Force specializes in sonic booms, and you hear them all the time, which puts you off guard. We've been living in Jerusalem for six months, and we had stopped thinking that every boom was a bomb.

The day after the party, a Belgian student came over to help clean up the crowns and magic wands and glitter. Last summer, she walked away from the bombing of Jerusalem's No. 26 bus with a traumatized eardrum, but the girl behind her lost both eyes, and four people were killed. "That was a mini-bomb in comparison," she says. She was still riding the buses every day up until the No. 18 exploded, figuring that she couldn't be struck twice. But spring is coming, the weather is turning warmer, and next week she's going out to buy a bike.

—AMY WILENTZ

Bill Clinton, whom I don't trust? That's our scenario. It doesn't make sense for us to say it now, but that's what it's gonna be," he concluded, leaving out one awkward fact. Before Bob Dole can be Not Clinton, he may need to convince primary voters that he is, in effect, Not Dole.

EXILE ON CENTRE STREET

"OUTRAGEOUS," says a First Amendment lawyer at one of the city's most prestigious firms. He is speaking not of some judge's latest gag order or some jury's zillion-dollar libel award, but of fellow-attorney Martin Garbus. This is strange, because Garbus has defended the free-speech rights of Lenny Bruce and David Halberstam and Philip Roth, of civil-rights protesters in Mississippi and union organizers in California, of Andrei Sakharov and Václav Havel. Now, though, Garbus has exiled himself from the so-called First Amendment Club. For the first time in his thirty-five-year career, Martin Garbus is suing the press. His client is a twenty-nine-year-old black lesbian who filed charges of rape in 1994; his adversary is the brash Mike McAlary, of the *News*, who, in three columns based on anonymous police sources, insisted that her claim was a hoax and she was a liar.

Floyd Abrams, arguably the nation's leading First Amendment specialist, compares Garbus's turnabout to "people who leave their role as prosecutor and rather quickly become counsel for drug defendants." James Goodale, whose clients include the *Times*, says, "This is much, much worse." Robert Sack, who represents the *Wall Street Journal*, likens First Amendment law to a religion. "Switching sides," he concludes, "is close to apostasy."

On a recent morning, the object of this ire is seated in his Madison Avenue office, which is decorated with a large Melissa Meyer painting and framed jackets of his books. Garbus, who is sixty-one, has springy gray hair, a round face, and a healthy disregard for the Bar Association's dress code (he sports a lilac shirt with a startlingly colorful tie). Although, like his adversary McAlary, he has been accused of being a showboat, he speaks slowly and softly. "I'd rather she hadn't come to me," Garbus says of his client, who is suing for twelve million dollars but whose case he has taken pro bono. "But what was done to her was beyond the pale. I've never seen

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anything like this, in terms of a deliberate ignoring of facts." (McAlary, who will be deposed in State Supreme Court on March 6th, has admitted that he wrote his pieces without consulting either the alleged victim or the police, lab, and hospital reports; his lawyer has moved to dismiss the case.) Garbus describes the rape articles as "a kind of madness" and points out that reporters at the *News* itself urged him to oppose the columnist: "The First Amendment is best protected by *not* letting things like this happen."

Still, Garbus finds himself in an odd position. Take, for instance, Justice Charles E. Ramos's July decision declaring Garbus's anonymous client a "public figure" and blasting libel suits (even "malicious reports . . . must be privileged"). Ordinarily, this is just the sort of thing Garbus would cheer. In his currently somewhat topsy-turvy world, though, the opinion was considered a blow to his case.

And, while Garbus says—albeit with a sigh—that he is "comfortable" with his choice, he adds, "I've told my colleagues within the First Amendment world that I would *never* take another plaintiff's case." Undoubtedly, membership in the club does have its privileges, and Garbus's face collapses into a kind of crumpled wound when he is told what some of his colleagues are saying. "I'm astonished," he almost whispers. "Prosecutors who leave the government do it for the *money*. I'm just astonished."

Indeed, the sniping lawyers aren't necessarily supported by the ink-stained wretches they protect. "Condemning anyone on the basis of unnamed sources is a blot on our profession," the *Times's* Anthony Lewis warns. Nat Hentoff, who has written on civil liberties for the *Village Voice* for almost four decades, argues, "It would ordinarily be extraordinary for Garbus to take a case against a reporter. But to pillory a woman with anonymous sources—it was so disgusting that I'm with Garbus all the way."

Upon regaining his composure, Garbus ponders the club's accusations. "I find it hard to understand how they can think I'm not being consistent in my beliefs," he says, with escalating passion. "They haven't paid the prices I have. I was shot at and jailed with the farmworkers in Delano. For two years, the Pentagon Papers were in my house. At the end of the day, I trust my own judgments about what's best for the First Amendment."

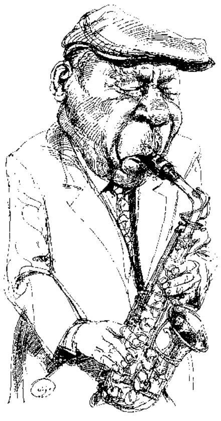
And what would his former clients Bruce, Sakharov, and Havel think of his latest case? "Terrific, terrific, terrific," Martin Garbus answers.

PULP FRICTION

If you're looking for a copy of *Paper*, don't go to Spring Street Books. "Sorry, but we no longer carry *Paper* magazine on account of nasty + 'cranky' attitude of its publisher and his writers," a handwritten sign by the register explained. The sign was a riposte to a blurb in *Paper's* January issue which criticized the SoHo bookstore for its "cranky manager/owner and spotty shelving." Israel Jaronowski, who has owned the shop for thirteen years, took offense and complained to David Hershkovits, the co-editor and publisher of the attitudinal downtown monthly. Jaronowski said the other day that he decided to banish *Paper* "when I called Hershkovits and he sounded more brash and more nasty."

Hershkovits, who claims to have experienced Jaronowski's crankiness firsthand, wondered, "Why should someone in the business of selling books and magazines ban a magazine just because it says something they don't like?" Weighing in on *Paper's* side was one of Jaronowski's own employees, who confided, "He really *is* kind of cranky."

BIRTHDAY OF THE COOL



Benny Waters

When the next-door neighbor's yard dogs barked a particular bark, Benny Waters got up from a love seat on his front porch in Hollis, Queens. He rents a room in the gray aluminum-sided house from an old friend, Willie Williams, during the six months or so a year that he isn't working overseas, playing alto sax in jazz concerts and festivals throughout Europe. "That must be Stan," said Waters, who lost his sight four years ago, after cataract surgery. And he was correct: the pianist Stan Hope was picking Waters up for one of his rare gigs at a New York jazz club. The occasion was Waters' ninety-fourth birthday.

In 1924, when the Baltimore-born musician first came to New York to play at Harlem's Lafayette Theatre, jazz was still an emerging form of Negro dance music. "There was a lot of criticism of what we were doing," said Waters, a veteran of several seminal jazz ensembles, including the orchestras of Fletcher Henderson and of Louis Armstrong's mentor King Oliver. "You should have heard what they said about King Oliver: 'It's all just a beat. There's no melody. It's jungle music—watch out!' They thought we were some kind of bad influences." Waters speaks fast and musically, his reedy baritone modulated and the phrasing of his words rhythmic. He would repeat a thought—"Things change, they change, all things change"—and make it swing. "I hope nobody makes too big a deal out of this birthday business tonight," he said. "I just want to play my horn. I don't want no big deal made for me. I got myself a new horn for my birthday—a nice Selmer—and I want to play it."

At the Five Spot, veteran jazz fans and musicians began gathering while Waters and his band (Hope, the bassist Arvell Shaw, and the drummer Eddie Locke) wrapped up the sound check for the nine-o'clock set. A banner above the bandstand read "Happy Birthday, Benny," and the big, rococo night club felt truly clubby: the saxophonist Jimmy Heath and the bassist Milt Hinton traded old stories; the disk jockey Phil Schaap hopped tables; the pianist Tommy Flanagan soaked it all in from a spot in a corner.

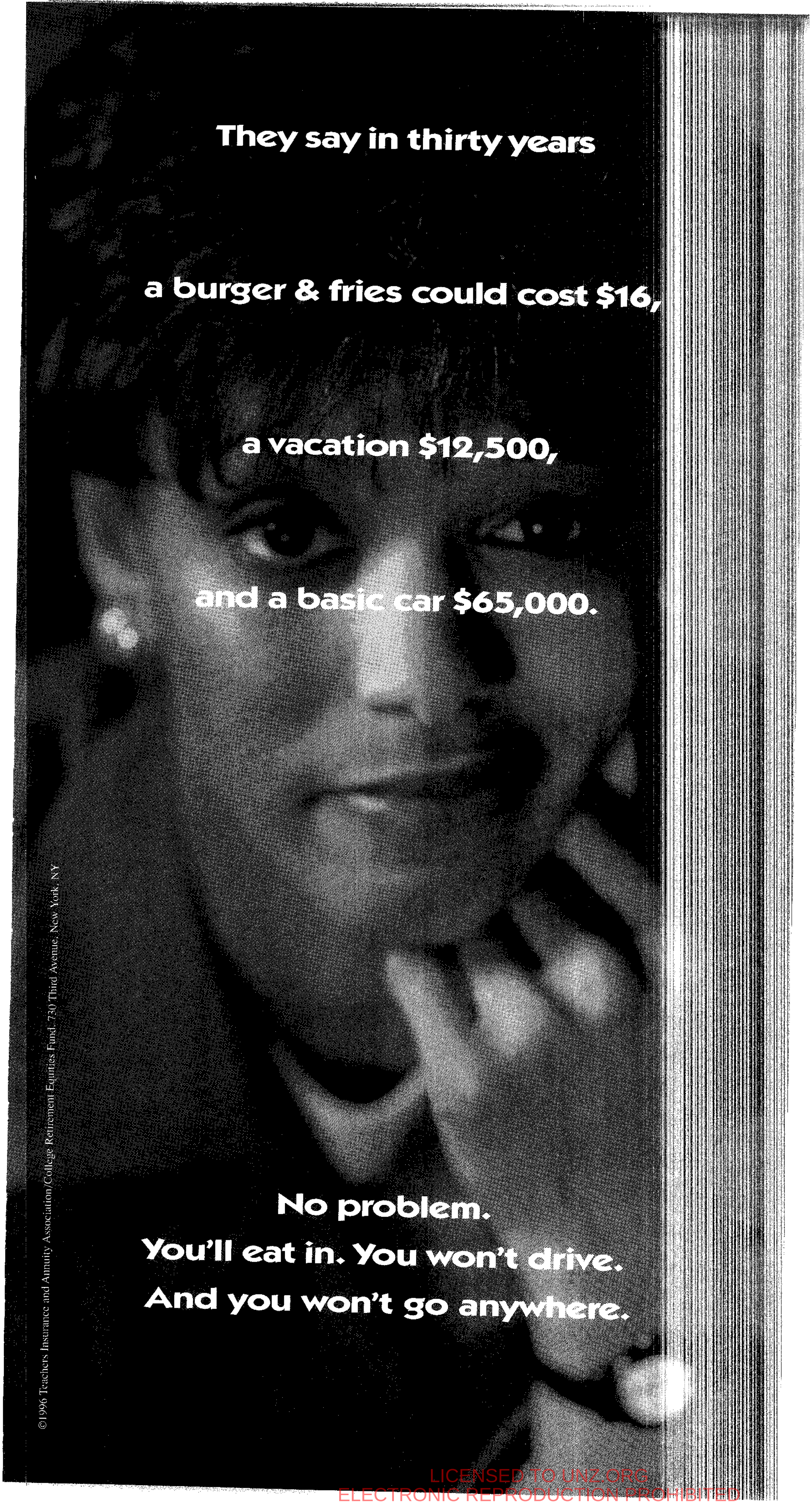
"I don't know much about Benny Waters," explained a twentyish man who introduced himself as Prophecy, a rapper from a group called Primordial Source. He wore a skullcap with "Naughty" stitched on the front. "I came here because I know this is where it all stems from—jazz and the blues. If we didn't have guys like this, there wouldn't be no hip-hop, and I wouldn't be here today." He waited in line to shake Waters' hand. Prophecy said "Happy birthday" and took a seat.

"Who was that?" Waters asked.

"A rap artist who came to see you."

"My goodness," Waters said. "That makes my day. That makes my day, just makes it." ♦

"Buchananizing Bob Dole," John Heilemann; "Exile on Centre Street," Susie Linfield; "Pulp Friction," Blake Eskin; "Birthday of the Cool," David Hajdu.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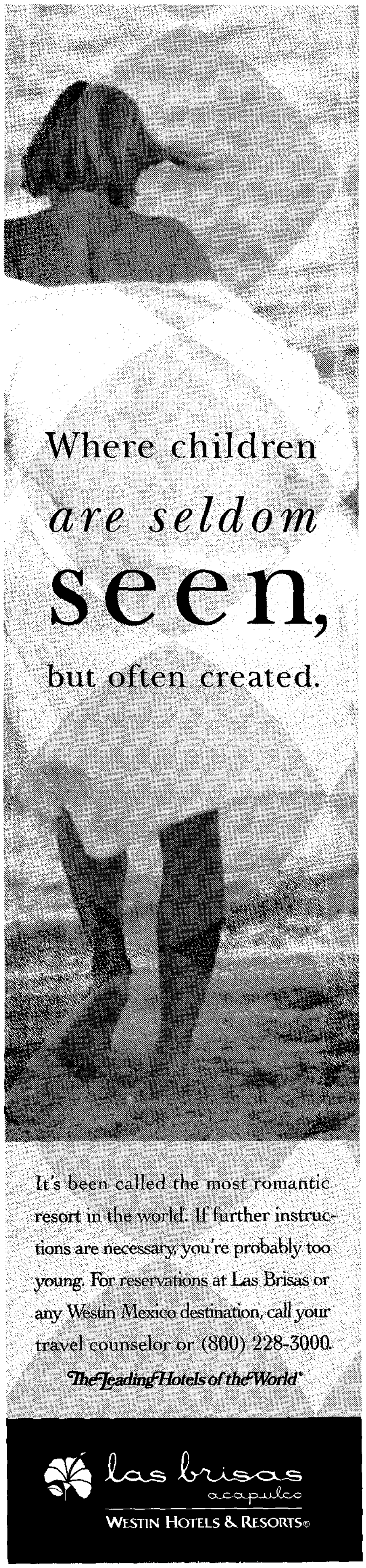

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ANNALS OF LAW

A COMPLICATED LIFE

F. Lee Bailey has been in trouble before, but this time he may be heading for jail—partly because of the testimony of Robert Shapiro.

BY IRA SILVERMAN AND FREDRIC DANNEN

ROBERT SHAPIRO was smirking at F. Lee Bailey. It was the morning of February 2nd of this year, and the celebrated feud between the two criminal-defense attorneys which had begun in Los Angeles during the O. J. Simpson trial had advanced to Round 2—a round that would be fought this time not on national television but in a little courthouse in Ocala, a county seat of some sixty-five thousand souls in the alligator country of north Florida. The presiding judge, a slight, balding man in his sixties named Maurice Paul, peppered his speech with "y'all"s, but his demeanor was not friendly. He, too, had his sights fixed on Bailey, and, as one courtroom veteran put it, "he had that jail look in his eye."

Bailey, who appeared ashen and sombre, was in trouble with federal prosecutors in north Florida, and he had been summoned to a hearing on a matter that could indeed cost him his liberty. Shapiro, deeply tanned and looking ebullient, had come to testify for the government. Though Bailey did his best to avoid eye contact with Shapiro, he could not fail to notice the smirk, and he later said he'd known just what Shapiro was thinking: "I got you back, you son of a bitch!"

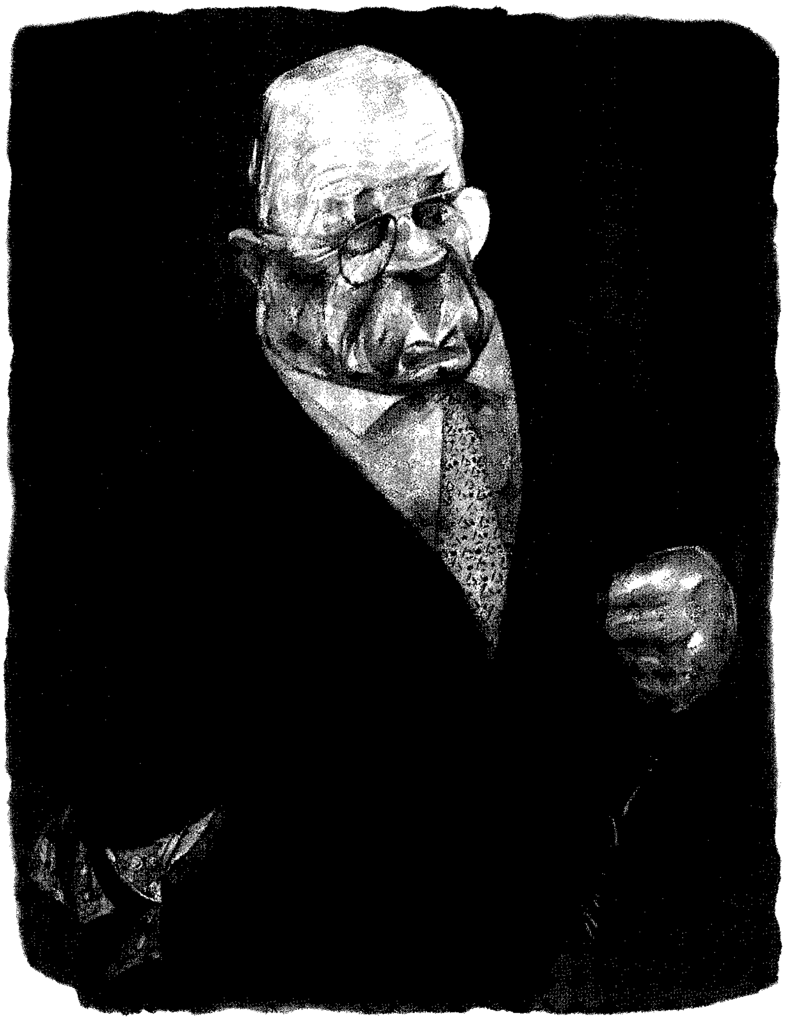
In 1994, Bailey and Shapiro shared another client besides O. J. Simpson—a wealthy drug trafficker named Claude Duboc, who pleaded guilty in north Florida and agreed to forfeit millions of dollars in cash and assets in the hope of reducing a life sentence. One of those assets, a block of stock, was expected to rise dramatically in value soon, but if the Florida prosecutors seized it they were required by policy to sell it immediately; so the stock was given to Bailey to hold, they said, in trust for the government. Two years later, the stock had appreciated by about twenty million dollars, and, to the prosecutors' astonishment, Bailey now said that those profits were his to keep. The government filed an emergency motion with Judge Paul, and he ordered Bailey to come to a hearing and to bring the stock with him. Bailey had shown up at the hearing, all right, but, to the further astonishment of the prosecutors, he had dared to come empty-handed.

F. Lee Bailey is a former Marine fighter pilot with the visage of a bulldog and a personality to match, and many of his professional colleagues are in awe of him. One of them has said, "He's rough-and-tumble, he doesn't live within the norms of society, and he fears nobody." And in this case, as it happened, Bailey held an ace: the Florida lawmen had trusted him so thoroughly that the agreement between him and the government with regard to the stock had never been set down on paper—not even in a letter or file memo. All that existed to refute Bailey's claim of entitlement to the stock profits—a claim that one of the prosecutors called "absurd and unbelievable"—was the memory of the people involved in the case.

One of those people was Robert Shapiro, whose testimony that afternoon, it seemed, was as damaging to Bailey as he could make it. By then, however, Bailey had regained not only his color but his swagger. In a subsequent interview, he referred to the north-Florida lawmen as "these backwoods people," and at times he seemed to be laughing at his principal accuser, a federal prosecutor from Tallahassee named David McGee.

By the conclusion of the hearing, McGee was fighting mad, and in an emotional closing argument he told Judge Paul, "What you have is proof that F. Lee Bailey has stolen from the people of the United States in excess of twenty million dollars. . . . He has acted in complete and total derogation of his obligations to the people of the United States . . . to this court . . . to his profession, and . . . to his client. He did it for the oldest, the most tiresome, and the least excusable reason—to put money in his own pocket. For that, he gives up ethics, he lies, and he cheats. . . . I ask that the court place him in jail."

Judge Paul retired to chambers to deliberate, and McGee sat down at the prosecution table, still fuming. It was apparent that McGee and Shapiro had become allies not merely in legal disputes with Bailey but in their feelings of betrayal by him. Shapiro had brought Bailey into the Simpson case, and he believed Bailey had tried to elbow him aside; McGee thought he had made a trust agreement with Bailey, never imagining that the famous defense attorney would in this manner defy, and embarrass, the government of the United States. Well, they had both underestimated F. Lee Bailey. Now the question was whether Bailey had underestimated them.


What could bring Bailey down? Twenty million dollars, an irate prosecutor, and a friendship that went bad.

STEVE BRODNER

BAILEY had displayed a knack for getting under people's skin—at the Simpson trial, Marcia Clark, in open court, called him a liar—and he seemed not to care what others thought of him. In a 1971 memoir, "The Defense Never Rests," he writes fondly of "the satisfactions of being a renegade" and likens the role of criminal-defense attorney to the heroic struggle of a single-combat warrior. The book opens with the story of how, as a Marine lieutenant in his early twenties, he was forced to land a Sabre Jet without engine power. "If I ran a school for criminal lawyers, I would teach them all to fly," he writes. "The ones who survived would understand the meaning of 'alone.' "

Whatever forces drove Bailey, they made him a formidable courtroom advocate. Even people who did not like him acknowledged him to be one of the most charismatic trial lawyers this side of Edward Bennett Williams. Bailey, who stands a compact five feet nine, is renowned for his prodigious memory, his dogged cross-examination style, and his oratorical skills. (He has a resonant, William Holden sort of voice.) His critics say that he has slipped in the past decade or so—that his well-known excesses, which include four marriages, have taken their toll. The general populace does not seem to think so: a 1993 public-opinion poll taken by the *National Law Journal* selected Bailey as the most admired lawyer in America.

Bailey does lead an immensely busy life, and his overloaded schedule would probably be impossible if he didn't maintain several airplanes. (He used to have a helicopter as well, and on at least one occasion flew it under a bridge.) He is the lead partner in two law firms, one in Boston and the other in West Palm Beach, and until recently was a partner in a third firm, in New York, which specialized in aviation disasters. He is also a businessman. Bailey is the C.E.O. of Palm Beach Roamer, a Florida corporation that upgrades executive aircraft and yachts. (One of the aircraft models, a retooled twin-piston, is called the Bailey Bullet.) And he is the owner of Computer Law, a consulting firm that helps attorneys computerize their data. (Bailey is a computer and gadget nut.) To date, he has published seventeen books, including a novel. He says simply, "I squeeze more out of life than most people."

The eldest son of an advertising man, Bailey was born in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1933. At twenty, he left Harvard, where he was majoring in English, to join the military—first the Navy, and then a Marine squadron at Cherry Point, North Carolina. While at Harvard, he had met a Lesley College student who, in 1953, became the first of his wives; within three years, they had had two sons, and in 1961 they were divorced. Bailey had another son, with his second wife—his former secretary, whom he described shortly before their divorce as an "unreasonably attractive blonde." Both his third wife and his current wife, Patricia, were flight attendants. In the mid-eighties, Bailey moved his principal residence from suburban Boston to south Florida, so that Patricia could be near her ailing parents.

Bailey had discovered law by a fluke assignment to chief legal officer of his Marine squadron, after a more qualified candidate was killed in a Sabre Jet crash. When he completed his military service, he earned a law degree at Boston Uni-

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versity, and in November of 1960 was admitted to the Massachusetts bar. A year later, Sam Sheppard, a Cleveland doctor convicted of murdering his wife—the case inspired "The Fugitive" television series and movie—hired Bailey. Sheppard had by then been in jail for seven years and had exhausted eleven appeals. Bailey argued the case up to the Supreme Court, won a new trial on the ground that the judge had failed to shield the jury from the press and public prejudice, and, in 1966, got Sheppard acquitted. Ever since, Bailey has been known for homicide cases—his other clients have included Albert DeSalvo, the confessed Boston Strangler, and Captain Ernest Medina, the Army company commander blamed for the My Lai massacre.

He has also been controversial. While preparing to try two related murder cases in New Jersey in 1968, he wrote a letter to the governor in which he accused the prosecution of having "pressured or bribed" witnesses; when the letter was leaked to the press, Bailey was removed as defense counsel and ultimately suspended from practicing law in New Jersey courts for a year. In 1970, a state judge in Massachusetts sharply criticized him for, among other things, attacking the conviction of a client during television interviews with Johnny Carson and Joey Bishop—a practice considered shocking at the time. The judge toyed with disbarring Bailey but instead opted for judicial censure. Bailey ran into far worse trouble three years later, as the lawyer for a Florida businessman named Glenn Turner, who ran Dare to Be Great, a motivational-tape distribution enterprise that was alleged to be a Ponzi scheme. Federal prosecutors in Orlando indicted Turner, eight of his associates, and Bailey for mail fraud. Two years and one mistrial later, the charges against Bailey were finally dismissed, but the case had nearly bankrupted him.

In 1982, Bailey was a defendant again—this time in San Francisco, on a charge of driving while intoxicated, which was punishable by up to six months in jail. He had been pulled over by a motorcycle patrolman, who claimed that Bailey smelled of liquor. Bailey was handcuffed and brought to the police station, and when he refused to take a blood-alcohol test, he was strip-searched, and held for several hours. After a two-week trial, the jury found him guilty only of running a stop sign, and he was fined fifty dollars.

The verdict was a victory not only for Bailey but also for the man who had defended him—Robert Shapiro. The two had met on a drug case in Hawaii in the early seventies, as respective counsel for two of the defendants, and had got the case dismissed on procedural grounds before it came to trial. They remained close. When Shapiro's first son, Brent, was born, in 1980, Bailey was his godfather.

In truth, Shapiro seemed to have little in common with Bailey. He had spent most of his life in Los Angeles, had a private practice on the Avenue of the Stars, and was an archetypal Beverly Hills lawyer. His client list was heavy on celebrities: between 1991 and 1993 he represented the baseball player Vince Coleman on a charge of possession of an explosive device, the director Ivan Nagy when he was arrested for allegedly recruiting prostitutes, and the rap star Vanilla Ice on a misdemeanor weapons charge. Unlike Bailey, Shapiro seemed intent on *not* making enemies, and he was proud of his good relations with prosecutors and with the Los Angeles Police Department. He was known especially for plea bargains; in 1991, for instance, he negotiated a voluntary-manslaughter plea for Marlon Brando's son, Christian, who had originally been charged with murder in the shooting death of his half-sister's lover.

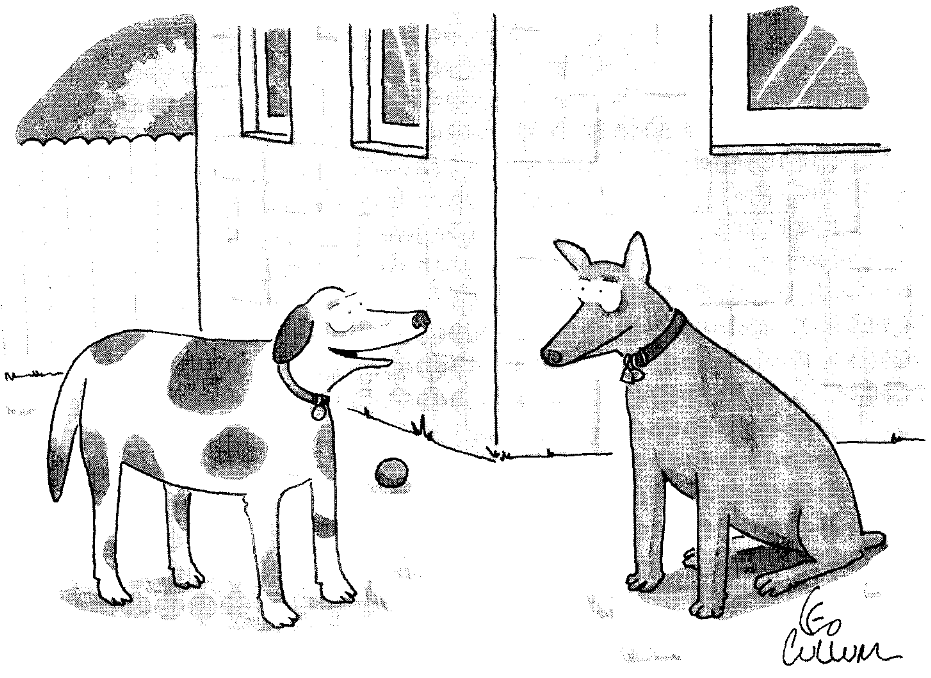
In March of 1994, a new client unexpectedly came Shapiro's way. Robin Duboc, a woman he knew socially, called him to say that her ex-husband, Claude, had been arrested on charges of drug trafficking and money laundering, and needed a lawyer. Shapiro was not yet famous—the arrest of O. J. Simpson was still three months away—but Claude Duboc liked him, and he was hired. Within a week, Duboc had also hired F. Lee Bailey; it would help to have Bailey on board, Shapiro had argued, because he had had experience with the Florida courts. The fact is, though, that Bailey's Florida law practice was mostly in and around Miami—the Southern District—and he had never even met the judge assigned to the Duboc case, Maurice Paul. He had heard, though, that Judge Paul was a former military man, and was sure they would get along just fine.

THE federal judicial district that comprises Tallahassee, Gainesville, and Pensacola is notoriously hardline, especially where drugs are concerned. Until federal prison sentences were standardized, in the mid-eighties, drug offenders fared worse in north Florida than almost anywhere else in the nation. One former district judge there, Lynn Higby, was nicknamed the Time Machine. Maurice Paul, the current chief judge, has been described as Higby without the sense of humor. Paul is a Reagan appointee, and his rulings tend overwhelmingly to favor the prosecution. He speaks with a drawl and has a tight-lipped smile. Though his legal acumen is undisputed, he has about him an air of provincialism. Paul took a particularly hard line on narcotics. "Judge Paul truly perceives himself as a warrior in the war on drugs, rather than a referee," says Larry Turner, a Gainesville defense attorney.

There was something else about Judge Paul that did not bode well for Bailey in his own coming confrontation in north Florida. Paul's reputation on forfeiture, according to Lucy Morgan, a veteran reporter for the St. Petersburg *Times*, can be expressed in five words: "He will clean you out." Larry Turner adds, "Paul's favorite thing to tell a drug defendant is 'If you used drug money to buy a diaper for the baby your wife is holding out there—*I want that diaper!*' "

Paul had a perfect counterpart in David McGee, the tough first assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, in Tallahassee. McGee is forty-seven, tall and rangy, with a bushy mustache and a resemblance to the actor Nick Nolte. Nationally, he is perhaps best known for his conviction, in 1994, of Paul Hill, the ex-minister who shot and killed an abortion doctor and his escort in Pensacola; but locally he is celebrated for his almost missionary pursuit of drug traffickers. The federal-court calendar in north Florida often seems to bulge with drug cases, even though the region has far less of a drug problem than, say, south Florida, which is a port of entry; the explanation, by and large, is McGee. By law, if traffickers so much as pass through a federal district that district may claim jurisdiction over them, and that is virtually all the pretext that McGee needs to bring a case.

The prosecution of Claude Duboc was a prime instance of McGee's grabbing a case that arguably belonged in another venue. Duboc, who ran his enterprise with a partner named John Knock (now a fugitive), sold vast quantities of hashish mostly in Canada, and an estimated twelve hundred metric tons of marijuana almost entirely on the



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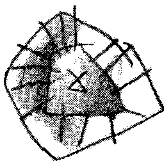
West Coast. Nevertheless, by the early nineties McGee had learned of Duboc and had plans for him. In June of 1993, an associate of Duboc's was lured to a hotel in Gainesville, to talk business with a certain Earl Kelly, who claimed he could recruit a crew to unload drugs for Duboc in Vancouver and San Francisco. Earl Kelly was really Carl Lilley, an agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration working under the supervision of Dave McGee. Before long, the associate and two other members of the Duboc organization were arrested.



By the spring of 1994, Duboc had taken up residence in the twelve-hundred-dollar-a-night Ambassador Suite of the Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong. Tall and sandy-haired, with a Gallic nose, he was born in New York, to French parents, in 1944. Duboc's enterprise did an estimated $165 million a year in drug business, and his capacity to earn was rivalled only by his capacity to spend. Among his possessions was a magnificent villa in the South of France, near Cannes, next door to the villa of a Saudi Arabian sheikh, who was obliged to move two palm trees that were obstructing Duboc's view of the Mediterranean.

McGee's office quickly obtained an order of extradition against Duboc, and in March of 1994, while dining at an expensive restaurant, he was arrested by the Royal Hong Kong Police and thrown in jail. He hired attorneys from Coudert Brothers—a law firm based in New York, with a specialty in international law—to try to fight the extradition. (Coudert also does legal work for this magazine.) But it was hopeless. By early April, Claude Duboc was incarcerated in the federal detention center in Tallahassee, awaiting trial.

Once Bailey and Shapiro had been hired to represent him, Duboc was faced with a decision. In a surprising role reversal, Shapiro wanted to fight the charges, and Bailey was the one recommending a plea bargain. "Shapiro was acting like an asshole," Bailey says now. "The government had an overwhelming case." The drug charges in the indictment against Duboc carried mandatory life terms, but Bailey told his client that if he coöperated with the United States Attorney's Office—and, most important, if he forfeited an "extraordinary" amount of money to the government—he could get as little as three to five years. Shapiro says he refused to endorse Bailey's optimism.

By mid-April, Shapiro and Bailey were still deadlocked over whether to fight the charges, and Shapiro essentially quit the case. (Bailey says Shapiro wanted a hefty referral fee from him; Shapiro denies this.) Within a week, Duboc had made his decision: he would plead guilty and coöperate. On April 25th, Duboc and Bailey sat down with prosecutors in their office in Tallahassee, and, as Bailey took notes on a portable computer, Duboc made a recitation of his worldly goods. Apart from cash holdings of about fifty-seven million dollars, Duboc's most valuable possession was the villa in the South of France, which was worth about thirty million. He also had a home in Poigny, near Paris, worth perhaps ten million. He owned expensive cars, boats, watches, art work, and antique furniture. And he held six hundred and two thousand shares of stock in a Canadian pharmaceutical company called BioChem Pharma, which traded on the NASDAQ.

Duboc strongly recommended that the government not sell the stock right away. BioChem Pharma, he said, was in the last phase of trials for a new drug called 3TC, to be used in the treatment of AIDS, and, if the drug was ultimately approved, the shares, then trading at around nine dollars, could go to fifty. Duboc says that he gave the prosecutors this information because he believed that the more money he made for the government the greater his chances of getting a lighter sentence would be—hadn't Bailey told him exactly that? Bailey maintains, however, that Duboc's real motive was that he entertained some scheme to keep the stock profits for himself.

The day after Duboc was debriefed on his assets, Bailey had two private meetings with Gregory Miller, then the head of the criminal division of the United States Attorney's Office, who reported to Dave McGee. Both Miller and Bailey agree that Bailey was offered possession of the BioChem stock, but the two men have different recollections of what else was said. According to Miller, Bailey was told that he would be holding the shares in trust for the government, so that if Duboc's prediction came true, and the value of the stock went up, the government would profit. Miller recalls being concerned about Duboc's houses—they had to be kept up, at considerable expense, in order to be sold advantageously. He says that by taking the stock Bailey was assuming responsibility for the upkeep of the houses, because it was to be paid for out of the stock fund. Finally, Miller says, Bailey was told that, even though the stock was drug-tainted, and therefore subject to forfeiture, the government would not oppose Bailey taking his legal fee for representing Duboc out of the stock fund. Of course, any such fee would have to be determined and approved by Judge Paul.

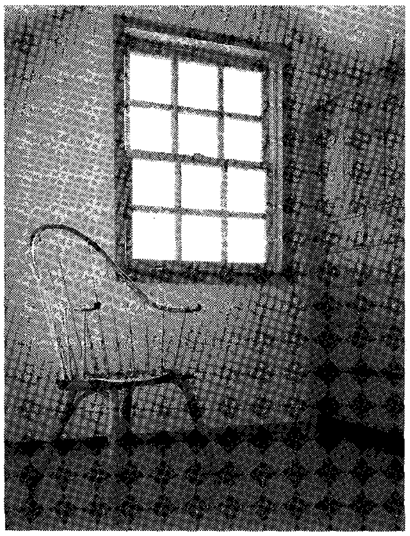
Bailey agrees only about the stock being the source of his legal fee. He says that there was no mention of his acting as a trustee; that he *volunteered* to use the fund to help maintain the French properties; and that, as he understood it, the stock was not a forfeitable asset. He also says there was no mention of the government receiving any upside gain from the stock. Indeed, he says, Miller warned him that he would be at risk in taking the stock, because it could go down, leaving him in danger of losing his fee. Therefore, Bailey says, "it was my risk and my gain." In any event, on May 9, 1994, the BioChem stock, then worth $5.89 million, was deposited in F. Lee Bailey's bank account at Credit Suisse in Geneva.

Around the same time, Duboc decided that perhaps Shapiro was right, and that he should consider fighting the indictment. Duboc scouted around for a new attorney to evaluate his case and advise him on whether he should fire Bailey. He settled on Edward Shohat, a Miami lawyer who had defended the Colombian drug trafficker Carlos Lehder. Shohat says that he initially planned to replace Bailey, as Duboc wished, but that he changed his mind when he saw how deeply admired Bailey was in the Northern District. "I'm sitting there, and the goddam court reporter asks Bailey for his autograph," Shohat recalls. Besides, Shohat agreed with Bailey's earlier assessment, that Duboc did not have much chance of winning. So, on Shohat's recommendation, Duboc retained both attorneys and on May 17, 1994, with both of them present, he pleaded guilty to one count of drug trafficking and one count of money laundering.

Shohat and Bailey did not get along. That May, the two lawyers met in France to visit Duboc's properties, and, during a train ride to Poigny, Shohat requested that Bailey provide him with copies of all the financial records in the case. Bailey, he says, did not respond and, after the trip, cut off all communication. By December of 1994, Shohat had been edged out of the case. Bailey, he says, finally sent him a sixty-five-thousand-dollar check for his services, which included fifteen thousand dollars in expenses. Today, Shohat has kind words only for Bailey's courtroom skills. "Lee is a terrific lawyer," he says. "Terrific. On his feet. He just dominates a courtroom. But no way could I work with that son-of-a-bitch prick."

THOUGH Duboc's guilty plea remained a source of disagreement between Bailey and Shapiro, they stayed good friends. When, less than a month later, O. J. Simpson became Shapiro's client, the two lawyers found they needed each other again. Bailey had tried some thirty murder cases; Shapiro had tried none. Big-name trial attorneys—Gerry Spence, for one—were hovering around Simpson like sharks. Shapiro immediately invited Bailey to join the defense team, ostensibly as a consultant but also, in a sense, as shark repellent. Bailey, for his part, had not had a high-profile case since he defended Patty Hearst, unsuccessfully, on bank-robbery charges, in 1976; the Simpson case was exactly what he needed to put him back in the public eye.

Shapiro was not about to share his fee in the Simpson case with Bailey, however—not after giving him Claude Duboc. In a letter dated August 24, 1994, Shapiro spells out his agreement with Simpson: the former football star will pay Shapiro $1.2 million, in monthly installments of no less than a hundred thousand. Payments to Bailey, however, "shall be my responsibility, if any," the letter says. Bailey confirms that Shapiro never paid him for Simpson. At the hearing in Ocala last month, Dave McGee explored the question of whether any of Duboc's drug money found its way into the Simpson case. Shapiro testified that Bailey contributed "a tremendous amount" of sophisticated computer equipment used for Simpson's defense, and said he did not know who paid for



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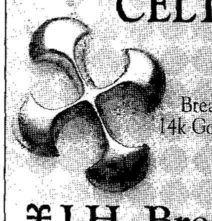

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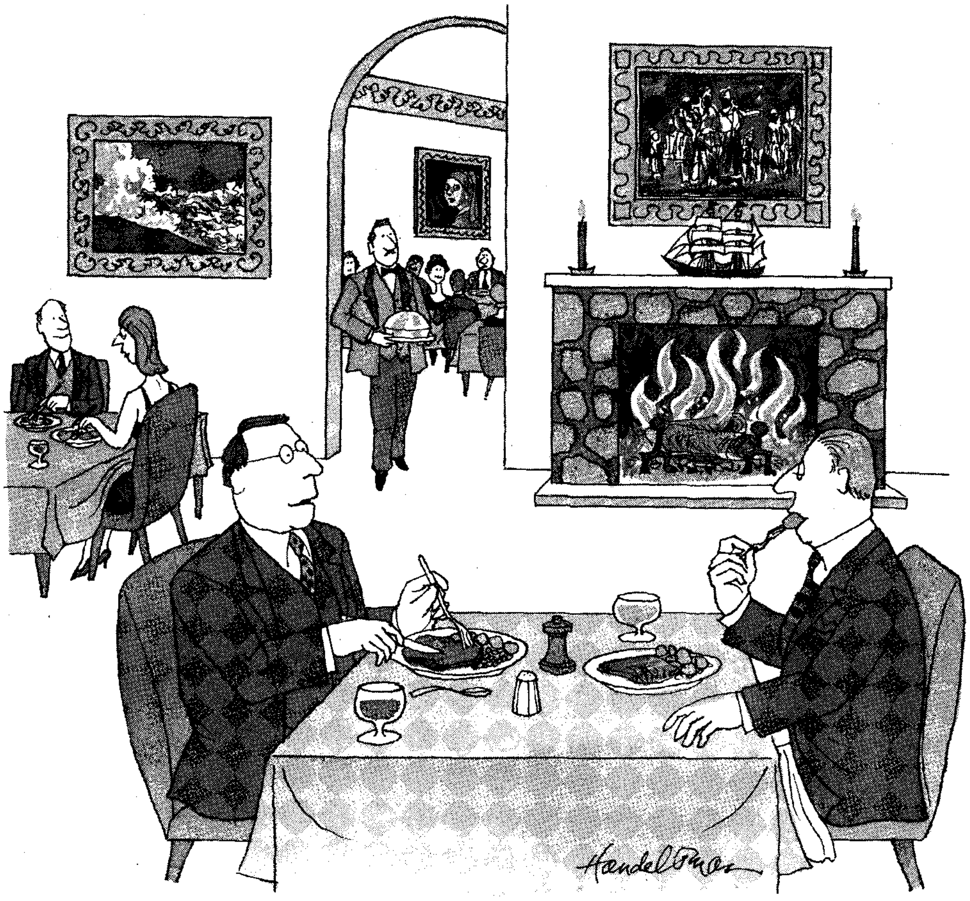

"I've been thinking about the flat tax and how it would inflict hardship on the poor, and I can live with that."

it. The equipment was installed and operated in Shapiro's office on the Avenue of the Stars by Howard Harris, Bailey's computer guru, with whom Bailey started the Computer Law consulting firm.

It is possible that another of Bailey's associates who worked on the Simpson case, a private investigator named John McNally, was paid out of the stock fund. McNally is a tough-talking Brooklyn-born former police detective; Bailey is fond of telling people how McNally had shot two robbers in a bar before he even graduated from the training academy. McNally quickly came to despise Shapiro, and probably had a good deal to do with Shapiro's falling out with Bailey.

"I think Lee Bailey's the greatest lawyer in the world, and Bobby Shapiro is the biggest fraud in the world," McNally says today. "I don't think Shapiro paid any attention to the Simpson case. He was out takin' bows and signin' autographs. I was there four months, I saw him in the office maybe seven times. One time, he asked me how long it took Ron Goldman to walk to Nicole's house—he didn't even realize Goldman drove. Another time, he calls a meeting and asks for a show of hands—how many think O.J. is guilty? Our jaws dropped. Look at the video when the verdict came in. You don't know which side he was on. He looked disappointed."

Shapiro declines to comment on anything McNally has to say, but he has publicly blamed the detective for abetting Bailey's treachery, as Shapiro sees it, in the Simpson case. In January of 1995, the New York *Daily News* ran an article headlined "VAIN SHAPIRO DESERVES FATE," and reported that Simpson was "benching" Shapiro in favor of Johnnie Cochran, and that "legal legend F. Lee Bailey is expected to assume an expanded role." Shapiro believes that McNally planted the article—the detective denies it—as part of a Machiavellian campaign by Bailey to enhance his own role in the case. Shapiro says he stands by a statement he made to Barbara Walters immediately after the Simpson acquittal: "I will not talk to F. Lee Bailey again." At last month's hearing in Ocala, he described their relationship as "permanently severed." Bailey simply shrugs. "Shapiro is history," he says.

DUBOC had been right about BioChem Pharma. On November 17, 1995, the company's AIDS drug was approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration; its shares had already begun to soar. By January of this year, the stock had risen from about nine dollars a share to the high forties. Duboc had been sitting in jail in Tallahassee for nearly two years, and he was still awaiting sentencing by Judge Paul. In order for Duboc to get anything less than life, he needed the prosecutors to write the Judge a letter detailing all that he had done for the government, but it was too soon to ask for the letter. He had pleased the prosecutors by assisting the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in a drug case in British Columbia, but after two years the houses in France remained unsold. And Bailey still had the BioChem shares. In the meantime, Duboc says, Bailey was slow to return his calls, and Duboc rarely got to see him except on prison television, performing at the Simpson trial.

Finally, early this year, Duboc decided to fire Bailey and replace him with two lawyers at Coudert Brothers, the law firm that had advised him on his extradition battle in Hong Kong. On January 11th, the Coudert attorneys appeared before Judge Paul, and Bailey sent, as his representative, a Florida attorney named David Schultz. During the hearing, Schultz made a surprise announcement: Bailey would, of course, withdraw from representing Claude Duboc, but he had no intention of returning the BioChem stock. The prosecutors were dumbfounded, and the following day Judge Paul issued an order to Bailey calling for a full accounting of Duboc's assets. The accounting that Bailey submitted a week later did not include the stock. Paul then ordered

Bailey to appear before him with the stock in hand and with all relevant financial records.

Until February 1st, the day before the hearing in Ocala, Bailey insisted that he was too busy with another case to show up. In less than two weeks, he would be defending an alleged Gambino-crime-family associate named Joseph Watts, in federal court in Brooklyn, on one murder and three murder-conspiracy counts. McGee informed Bailey's lawyer that if he did not come a warrant would be issued for his arrest. Bailey caught the last flight out of town, arriving in Florida at midnight, and walked into the Ocala courtroom the next morning at nine. Shapiro was already there, and so was Shohat, the Miami lawyer who had found Bailey impossible to work with. Shapiro took a seat against the wall no more than ten feet from the defense table, placing himself directly in Bailey's line of vision. Next to Shapiro sat Claude Duboc, in leg irons.

Bailey had come with two lawyers. One of them, Roger Zuckerman, the senior partner of a Washington law firm, had known Bailey for twenty-two years and helped defend Bailey in the last phase of the Dare to Be Great case in Orlando in the mid-seventies. Zuckerman, a balding, well-spoken, earnest man, clearly hoped to defuse the tension in the courtroom and keep his client out of jail. It was not going to be easy. The BioChem Pharma stock, he said apologetically, was not in the courtroom, and he explained that the Swiss government had frozen it, because the previous day Bailey's lawyer in Geneva had notified the Swiss authorities in a letter that the stock was alleged to be drug-tainted. (McGee was roused to sarcasm: "Drug money . . . has been there for eighteen months, and that letter goes out the day before this hearing. What a coincidence!") As for the financial records that Judge Paul had ordered, very little was in the courtroom. Bailey, Zuckerman told the court, led "a fairly complicated life," and spent his money in "a myriad of ways," and he believed that if he turned over his personal banking statements he might inadvertently compromise other clients.

Zuckerman's peacemaking mission was made vastly more difficult by Bailey's belligerence. As the morning wore on, Bailey, who had come to court in black cowboy boots with two-inch heels, affected a strut. When he sat down to be cross-examined by McGee, he answered McGee's perfunctory "Good morning" by saying sharply, "I don't think so." After a few more testy replies, Judge Paul called for a recess and asked Zuckerman to try to teach his client some restraint. Otherwise, he said, Bailey would not have to worry about preparing for his trial in Brooklyn, "because he will be a guest of the government here." Zuckerman did his best to oblige. "Mr. Bailey, would you try to control yourself?" he said at one point.

As Bailey spoke, Duboc shook his head in disbelief. Bailey had sold about a third of the stock, before its steep climb in value, netting $2.2 million, and he had taken a $2.3-million personal loan from Credit Suisse, using as his collateral the remaining shares, which were now worth about eighteen million. Of the four and a half million in cash that he had withdrawn, $1.1 million had been spent maintaining the French real estate, four hundred and fifty thousand had gone toward legal expenses related to Duboc, and about three million had simply been spent by him personally. Bailey said that he could not recall where most of it went, but he believed that three hundred thousand had been spent as a down payment on his new $1.2-million house in Manalapan, Florida, near Palm Beach, and he thought about a hundred thousand had gone to an engineering company that was doing some work on "an airplane I was building." Bailey has since admitted that about $1.5 million of the money went directly into Palm Beach Roamer, his aircraft-and-yacht company.

Bailey continued to insist that the stock had never been given to him as a trustee but had been paid to him "in fee simple"—but he added that, as the result of poor advice from an accountant, he had not paid any income tax on the money. Though Bailey did not disclose these figures at the hearing, he has since revealed that from the time he got the stock through the end of 1995 it represented eighty per cent of his gross income.

After Bailey stepped down, McGee called Ed Shohat, who seemed almost gleeful to be testifying, and who stated repeatedly his belief that Bailey had acted unethically. He said he had not seen a comparable case of "self-dealing" by a lawyer in twenty-three years of practice.

Shapiro was next. He pointedly con-

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tradicted Bailey at every turn, saying that in a conversation at the time of the stock transfer Bailey was "very specific" in stating that he had been appointed to hold the stock as "a trustee." McGee was clearly delighted with Shapiro's testimony. As Shapiro left the courtroom, a local reporter asked how it had felt to take the witness stand against a former friend. "Very painful," Shapiro said. He smiled broadly.

By now, it was almost 6 P.M., and Bailey's lawyers had still not put forward their case. By order of Judge Paul, the hearing resumed the next morning—Saturday, February 3rd. Bailey took the stand once again, and made another potentially damaging admission: he acknowledged being told that only Judge Paul could approve any legal fees, yet he had nevertheless already paid himself about six hundred thousand dollars in fees. Bailey continued to maintain that he was entitled to the money, because of the risk he had assumed in taking possession of the stock. "I would never have made an agreement where I took the downside risk and turned over any gains," he said. "It would have been insane."

McGee pounced: "Did you tell your client that? 'Mr. Duboc! Made a *heck* of a deal for you. If this stock goes up to fifty, like you say, *I'm* going to make twenty million dollars!' "

Up to this point, McGee had been firmly and indignantly in control of the courtroom. After Bailey concluded his testimony, however, McGee made what seemed a tactical error: he called his colleague Gregory Miller, as a rebuttal witness. Miller fared poorly on the stand, and Zuckerman was able to seize the momentum by making an issue of the government's inexplicable failure to set down its agreement with Bailey on paper. Zuckerman asked Miller what provision had been made if the stock in Bailey's bank account went to zero and nothing was left for a fee. No provision, Miller said, explaining, "That was a gamble he would have had to have taken." Miller even admitted that he had no idea how well the BioChem stock had done until January, when Bailey was replaced as counsel, though that information had been readily available in the newspaper. Zuckerman, in his closing argument, described the government's fee arrangement with Bailey as "the most poorly negotiated and most poorly drafted . . . since the beginning of time." (Fletcher Baldwin, a professor of law at the University of Florida in Gainesville, and an authority on criminal forfeiture, says that both the prosecutors and Bailey showed "incredibly poor judgment" in failing to memorialize their agreement on paper, and that Miller's testimony might work to Bailey's advantage if Bailey decides to litigate his right to the stock profits.)

JUPITER EVENING STAR

They weren't there anymore, the high clouds
we watched out our window at dusk.
From the airport in the distance the planes came
into view, starting as thin needles in air
then flaming out over the bright egg moon
and the flat still blue sky. The city lay before us
under a blackberry sunset. You're my mother,
he said suddenly. Who the cap fits, let her
toss it, I thought in my little-girl voice.
And then the brightest thing in the sky rose.

—JUDITH BAUMEL

For once, McGee sounded chastened. "There may be room for criticism in this case," he said. "We did in fact to some degree trust Mr. Bailey. And, Your Honor, we sincerely regret that trust." At that point, McGee regained his fire, and pressed hard for Judge Paul to send F. Lee Bailey to jail.

The Judge deliberated for nearly an hour and a half, and then returned to the bench. Bailey, he found, had shown no good-faith effort to comply with the court's order to produce the stock and the financial documents, and therefore was in civil contempt. "For such contempt," he said, "Mr. Bailey is sentenced to the custody of the Attorney General"—meaning imprisonment—"for a period of six months." Bailey remained impassive. "However, Mr. Bailey may purge himself of such contempt," Paul continued, provided that by February 29th he turned over the stock and financial documents, and repaid the three million dollars he had taken, without the court's permission, for his personal use. With that, the hearing was adjourned.

Two days later, Bailey appeared before Charles Sifton, the Chief Judge of the Eastern District of New York, in Brooklyn, and was asked whether he would be too busy "scrambling around" for the three million dollars to concentrate on defending Joe Watts. "I raised it last night," Bailey said. "Can we get on with this case?" In fact, Bailey had not raised the money, and he had to come up with more than three million. In order to get back the stock, he first needed to pay off the $2.3-million loan he'd taken against it, so he was actually $5.3 million in the hole.

Nevertheless, by the following Saturday, February 10th, Bailey was in fine spirits. He was ensconced in an apartment on the Upper East Side that had belonged to the former Columbia Pictures studio head David Begelman until his suicide, six months earlier. Bailey had converted it into a war room, with computer equipment and an overhead projector, to prepare for his defense of Watts. As his wife, Patty, served white wine and hors d'oeuvres to several of his law associates huddled around a table, Bailey reflected on his dustup in Florida. He was wearing brown slipper loafers and an aqua shirt, and looked utterly relaxed.

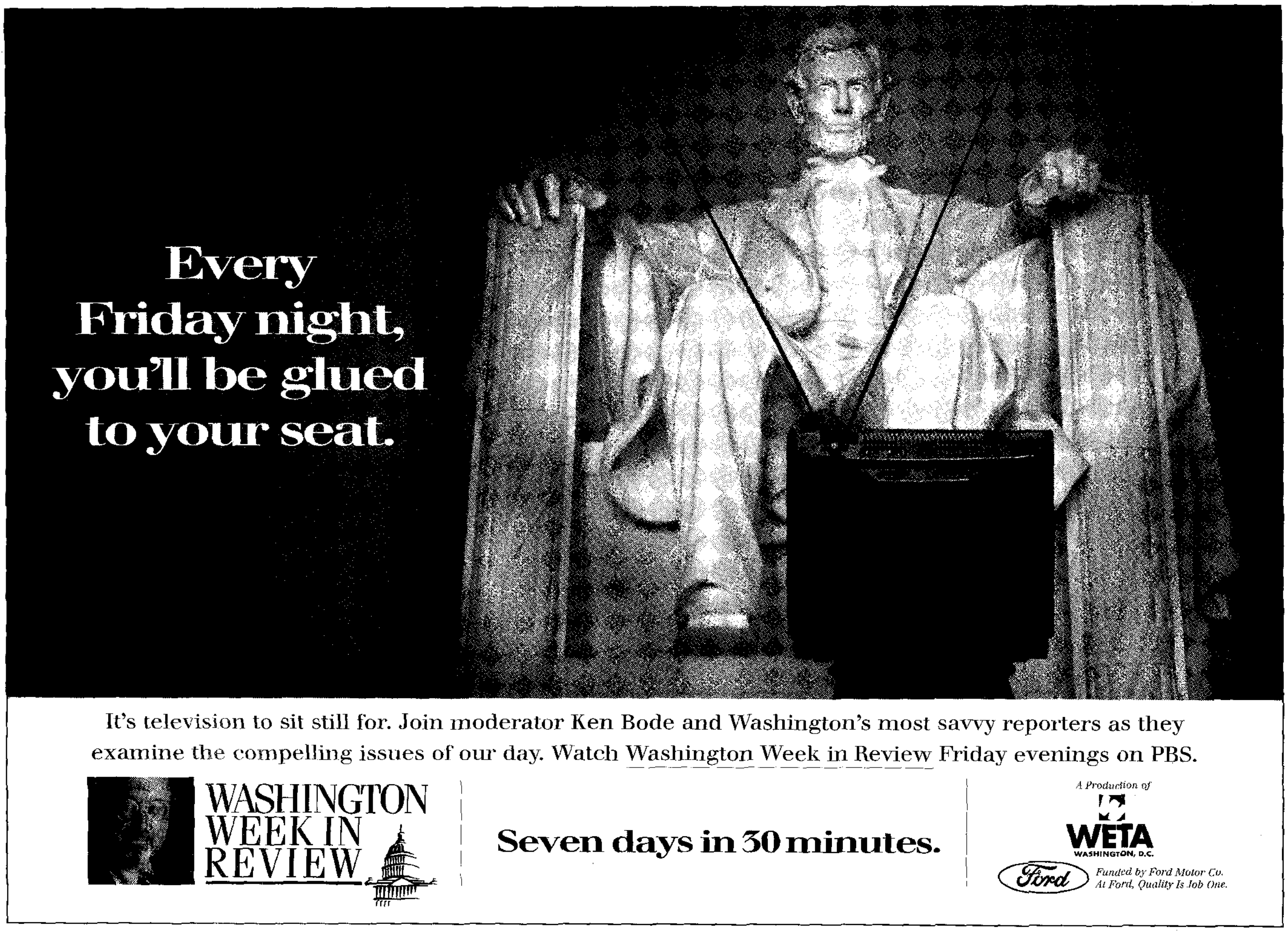
"Let me tell you something," he said. "After some of the things I saw and did as a marine, this was like playing in the sandbox with a bunch of little boys. I have no fear of the United States government or any of the bad people in it. My training is to deal with assholes." Bailey insisted he was fully prepared to sue the government for the right to keep the stock. "I do not intend to give it up," he said. "I worked damn hard, and sweated every day and night, and read the NASDAQ to try to decide whether to hold it or sell it."

Bailey had nothing but scorn for Shapiro and Shohat. "They were lying through their teeth, and I have a way to show it," he said. "We'll see how well they go through a polygraph test." His harshest comments, though, were aimed at Dave McGee. "I've gotten mad at a lot of people and never done anything, but this one's going to be hard to forget," he said. "He'd better never meet me coming around the corner. No one stands up in an American courtroom and calls me a thief. His family needs to know some pain. That was a dirty, filthy thing to do." Anyway, he added, McGee had underestimated him. "He thought if he sent me to the can I'd knuckle under," Bailey said, with a contemptuous half laugh. "Hell, I'd do six months standing on my head for *ten* million dollars!"

As the deadline approached for complying with Judge Paul's order, however, Bailey seemed to be losing his bravado. He suddenly had more time to concentrate on raising the money; the Joe Watts trial had ended abruptly in a plea bargain. But even with his days free he could not scrape together anything close to $5.3 million.

On February 27th, two days before the deadline, Bailey and Zuckerman, his defense counsel, appeared before Paul to ask for a three-week extension. As a gesture of good faith, Zuckerman said, Bailey was offering the court title to anything he owned—his planes, his boats, even his house. Bailey simply did not have much cash. His account at the Barnett Bank in Florida had a balance of about twelve thousand dollars. The Judge was plainly incensed to hear about the bank balance. On January 12th, he had ordered a freeze on all BioChem proceeds, and now, he was learning, Bailey had withdrawn and spent more than three hundred thousand dollars from that account *after* the twelfth. (Bailey said he had not read the order.)

One day before the deadline, Bailey once again took the stand in Paul's courtroom in Ocala. This time, he didn't strut. "I have worked day and night in every quadrant where I have any clout whatsoever to come up with the money," Bailey said. Zuckerman looked exhausted, and, during a break, he and Bailey were overheard shouting at each other. At the close of the hearing, McGee continued to urge the Judge to put Bailey in jail. "He speaks of his generosity," McGee said. "He's going to give you his home. The down payment, three hundred thousand dollars, came from money he took from the Swiss account, money he stole from the taxpayers. This is no generous act." Judge Paul ruled on the twenty-ninth. The request for more time was denied, and Bailey was ordered to comply by the following morning or surrender to the United States Marshal Service in Gainesville and begin serving his six-month sentence for contempt at the federal detention center in Tallahassee—the same facility that houses Claude Duboc. Bailey then got a temporary reprieve from jail when the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, in Atlanta, stayed Paul's order; a hearing was set for March 5th. Bailey's legal battle to remain free continues. Meanwhile, the Florida Bar has begun an investigation, and the Internal Revenue Service is expected to follow suit. Somewhere, presumably, Bob Shapiro is smiling. ◆



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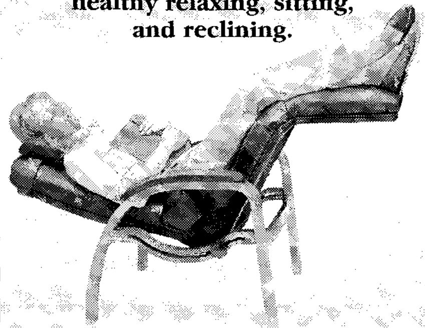

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POSTSCRIPT

THE GOOD DOCTOR

Remembering an evening with Dr. Haing S. Ngor.

BY ALEC WILKINSON

DR. HAING S. NGOR, the Cambodian obstetrician who survived a Khmer Rouge concentration camp and came to America and found work as an actor—he starred in the movie "The Killing Fields" and won an Academy Award—was shot and killed outside his apartment, in Los Angeles, on the night of February 25th. His neighbors heard two or three shots, which they took to be firecrackers, and the sound of a car racing off. No one knew whether he was killed during a robbery or was assassinated for being an inflexible opponent of the Khmer Rouge. Three years ago, while gathering material for a *New Yorker* piece about a group of Cambodian women who suffered an inexplicable form of psychological blindness as a result of their experiences in the Khmer Rouge camps, I spent some time with Ngor. We met through my friend Mitch Markowitz, the screenwriter, who wrote "Good Morning, Vietnam," and who knew Ngor because Ngor had auditioned for (but didn't get) a part in a movie Markowitz wrote and was directing. When I read in the *Times* that Ngor was found slumped near his car, I could picture the car, a Mercedes, and where it was parked, near a low, flat-roofed building he lived in, on a hill not far from the freeway—one of those strange Los Angeles landscapes where buildings alternate with scruffy plots of land that look like hills in the desert. I remember Ngor's apartment as being small and dark, its walls covered with photographs of him standing beside prominent people and receiving awards, the Oscar among them. There were Cambodian statues on side tables and framed mementos stacked against the sofas, and it was difficult to find a place to sit. At the time, Ngor was about to leave on one of the frequent trips he made to Cambodia to deliver medical textbooks and supplies he collected in Los Angeles.

Being a doctor in the killing fields, Ngor said, he had known that he was a marked man.

SCOTT HUNT

For me, Ngor was a figure of great authority and courage. Reading the paper on the Tuesday morning after his death, I thought of a dinner I'd had with him at a restaurant in Encino. As it happened, only women had been afflicted by psychological blindness, and I asked Ngor why he thought this was so. He held his hands in his lap, which made him look like a child, and he spoke softly, and mostly stared at the plate in front of him.

Being a doctor, he said, he had known that he was a marked man. To elude the Khmer Rouge, he slept in the forest, each night in a different place. Usually, he was too worried to sleep anyway. After he was captured, he was selected for punishment when he and his wife returned from a field where they had gathered some vegetables. A soldier met them and said that no one had given them permission to harvest the state's vegetables.

When someone told the soldiers that Ngor was a doctor, he said, he was tied to a stake, beside a woman who was pregnant. Each night, with a pair of pliers, the soldiers extracted one of her fingernails. Then they moved on to the doctor. "My time now," he said. They cut off part of one of his fingers. They tied him in a sack and raised it from the ground and beat him with sticks for two hours. They subjected him to the Chinese water torture. For the first thousand drops, the water was cool and refreshing in the heat, but then each drop began to feel like a detonation. The soldiers inserted bayonets between the legs of pregnant women. They cut a woman's breast off and cooked it and ate it. He saw a pregnant woman disembowelled. Around the perimeter of the camp the soldiers strung a row of shrivelled fetuses. One evening, they put rice in front of the starving doctor, just beyond his reach, and asked if he was a doctor. He knew that if he said yes they would kill his whole family but that if he said nothing they would kill only him.

After telling me this, Ngor looked at me and said, "You are so lucky. Your eyes have never seen torture, murder. My eyes have seen that. I saw my papa shot. My wife died in my arms."

He looked down at the table, and then he looked back at me, and he said, "I am blind in my mind. In my mind, I am already blind."

The rest of the meal we ate nearly in silence. ♦

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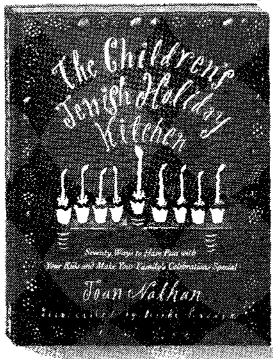
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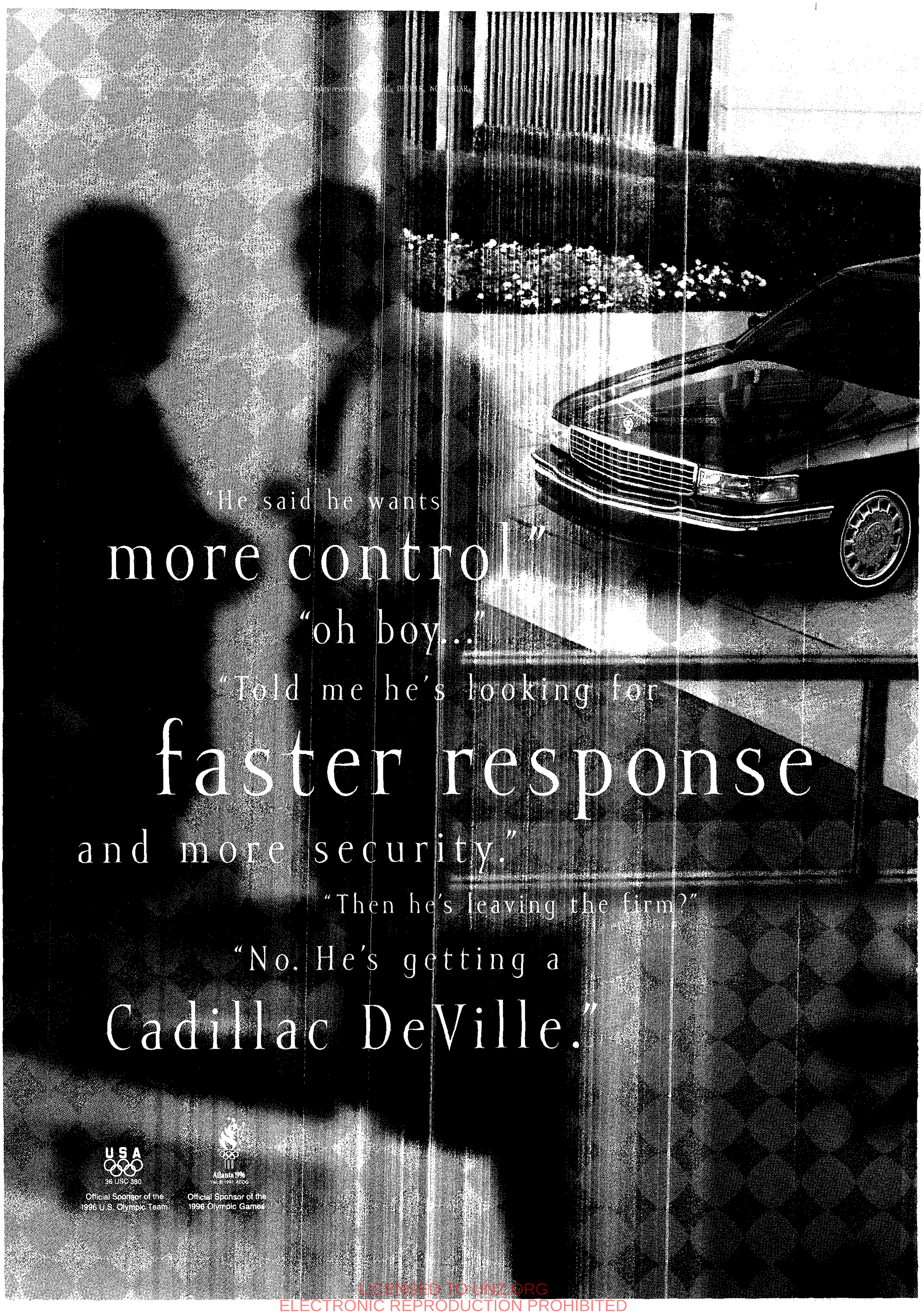

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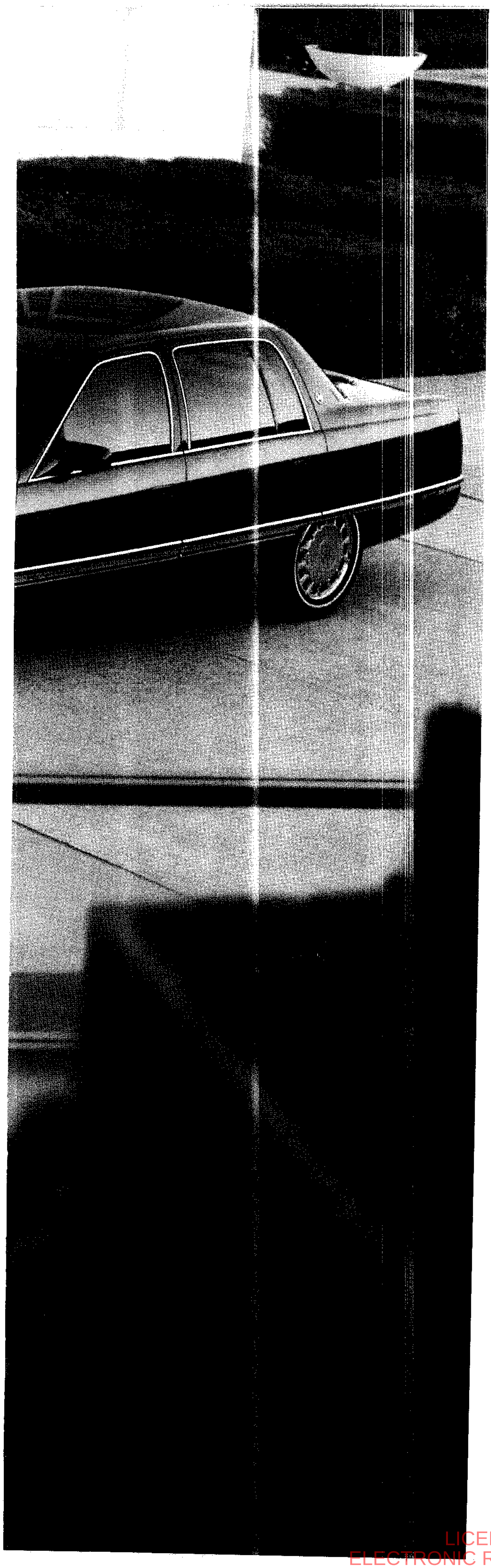

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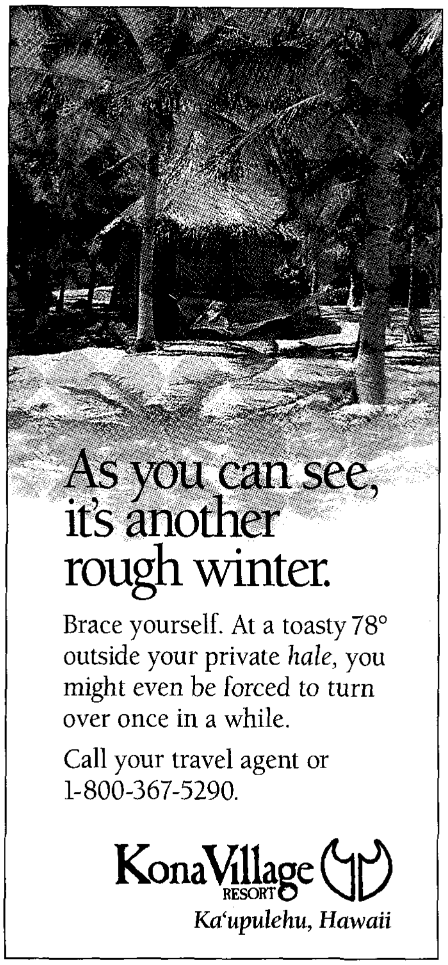

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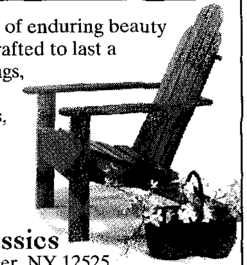

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The early successes of the Buchanan and Forbes campaigns are the latest indicators of the collapse of the establishment party system.

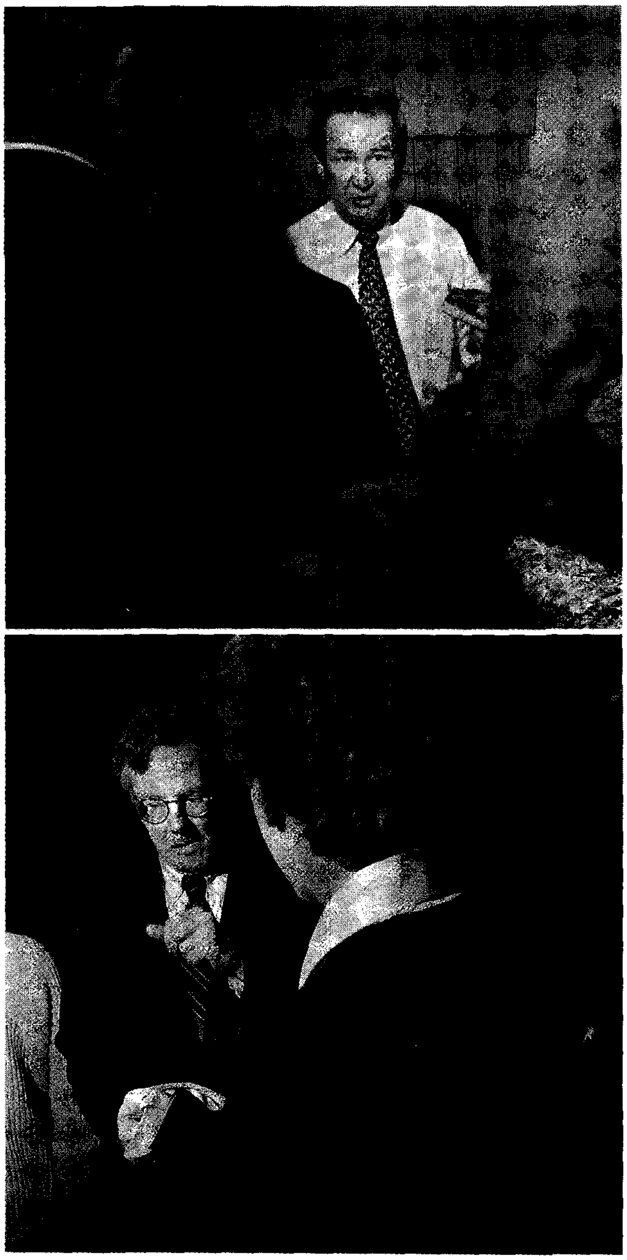
BY MICHAEL KELLY

THE rise of Patrick J. Buchanan and Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr., within the Republican Party was not an accident or an anomaly, or even much of a mystery. It was a predictable, if mostly unpredicted, event, a product of the larger dynamic that is driving politics these days: the prolonged crisis of the old order. The successes of Pat Buchanan and Steve Forbes in the early primaries reflect the continuing disintegration of the hollow Democratic and Republican party organizations, the continuing inability of what is left of the political establishment to come to terms with the wishes of a radically alienated electorate, and the continuing struggle of a new majority party to be born. This dynamic manifests itself in many ways, but the most obvious one is a recurrent feature of election time, when, from the establishment's point of view, the wrong people keep running and, increasingly, winning.

In 1992, Bill Clinton dismayed the Democratic establishment, which mistrusted his politics and presumed his unelectability, by winning his party's Presidential nomination, and went on to defeat the quintessential establishmentarian George Bush. In that year, too, Ross Perot came to the realization that there was no longer any cultural barrier to the idea of a crank billionaire's buying his way into a Presidential election. So great was the public disgust with the corporate and special-interest financing of both parties that Perot's billions actually gave a kind of reassurance to the electorate: the candidate could buy the election, but nobody could buy the candidate. Perot was a deeply unattractive campaigner. He talked funny, he was short and homely, and he was, it became increasingly clear, engaging in what the psychoanalysts call projective identification when he spoke of the deficit as the crazy aunt in the basement. Yet he won nearly nineteen per cent of the vote—the most significant showing of an independent candidate since 1912, when Teddy Roosevelt and his Progressive Party captured about twenty-seven per cent. In 1994, a Republican uprising that was nearly as hostile to its own party's old guard as it was to the Democratic hierarchy wiped out Democrats in races at all levels of government, destroying a national political structure that dated from the nineteen-thirties. Although 1992 favored Democrats and 1994 favored Republicans, in both cases the larger pattern was that of an insurrectionist campaign, running outside of and dismissed by the establishment, achieving a historic upset.

The same thing is happening now. Whether or not the establishment candidate, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, ultimately wins the G.O.P. nomination, the larger point is already proved. The 1996 primary season was "front-loaded" more heavily than ever before, with about forty primaries and caucuses in each party bunched together in January, February, and March. This move, which was advanced by states competing for a share of New Hampshire's clout, was welcomed by the leadership of the two parties because it manipulated the process in favor of the establishment candidates—President Clinton on the Democratic side and Senators Dole and Phil Gramm on the Republican—each of whom entered the race with high name recognition, party endorsements, and money in the bank. Instead, the early races of 1996 turned out to be the most vivid demonstration yet that the parties have lost control over their own electoral processes and their own electorates.

"Dole wanted the primaries front-loaded because he had the money, and he figured this would give him a great advantage," argues Bill Daley, a Democratic strategist who is a son of Chicago's original Mayor Daley and is a close adviser of the current one. "But all it showed was, once again, the failure of party bigwigs trying to rig the system. You just can't do it in national politics anymore. Endorsements don't mean anything. The politicians can't deliver the vote anymore, because there are very few politicians who have political organizations anymore. They can get some people to a photo op, but that's about it. Do you think you can get somebody to go out and walk a precinct anymore? Go to the front door and say, 'Hello, my name is Bill Daley, and I'd like to come in and talk to you about the election'? No way. People tell you they're going to walk a precinct, they mean they're going to stuff mailboxes. That's it. They bring their kids along, even. And that's here—that's in Chicago. What do you think it's like in Des Moines, all due respect to Des Moines?"

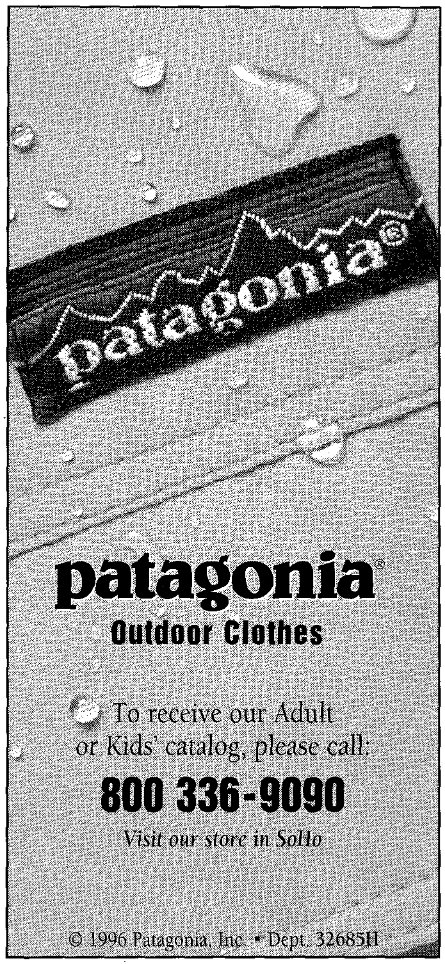

Why can't the Republican Party get Pat Buchanan and Steve Forbes to quit? Photographs by Larry Fink.

It is not just that the party establishments can no longer influence who gets the vote; they can no longer influence who enters the race. Nineteen ninety-six is the year that proves the adage: in America anybody can run for President. Consider the G.O.P. field in the early primaries, keeping in mind the presumption that the Republicans are the disciplined party in American politics: Steve Forbes, a multimillionaire magazine-publishing heir whose most conspicuous political idea would provide an immense tax break for himself; Alan Keyes, a radio-talk-show host who, as far as anyone can tell, is in the game for the sheer, naked pleasure of fulminating from the rooftops; Robert Dornan, a United States congressman who has the air of a fellow who must speak quickly because he knows that at any minute they might be coming to take him away; Morry (The Griz) Taylor, a wheel manufacturer and the first Presidential candidate in history to, in effect, raffle himself off, giving Iowa and New Hampshire voters a chance to win five thousand dollars by filling out a campaign questionnaire. And, of course, Pat Buchanan, whose political motto might have been borrowed from the advertising campaign of the 1965 movie "The Loved One": "Something to offend everybody."

Not only can these gentlemen run in the Republican primaries; they can run with a reasonable facsimile of respect. They get airtime. They get coverage in national newspapers and magazines. They get into the debates, and thus sometimes get to share a stage with the aged, respected, honorable candidate of the establishment—and rant at him, holler at him, insult him. And, as Bob Dole would say, Bob Dole has to stand there and take it. He has to stand there as Buchanan and Forbes and Keyes and Taylor—not one of whom has ever been elected to anything that matters, much less ever had the actual experience of governing—tell him to his grimacing face just how much contempt they have for him and everything he has spent his adult life working for. There seems to be nothing Dole can do about it, and nothing anybody else in the Republican Party can do about it, either. The G.O.P. primaries of 1996 have turned into theatre of the absurd. Last week, when the sponsors of a debate in South Carolina denied Alan Keyes a spot on the stage, that one-delegate candidate declared himself to be on a hunger strike.

"There is no one left to pick up the phone," says Bill Curry, a former state senator from Connecticut who is now a counsellor to President Clinton. "There used to be a system. The congressman would be called by the local party chairs at the behest of the leadership and given the word, and any congressman who didn't get in line wasn't renominated the next time he ran, and thus was forced to retire. That whole thing has imploded. The political parties are like factories that have been abandoned by their owners with all the capital equipment lying around on the floor—the town committees, the county committees, the state conventions, the whole nominating process."

This is only slightly hyperbolic. The



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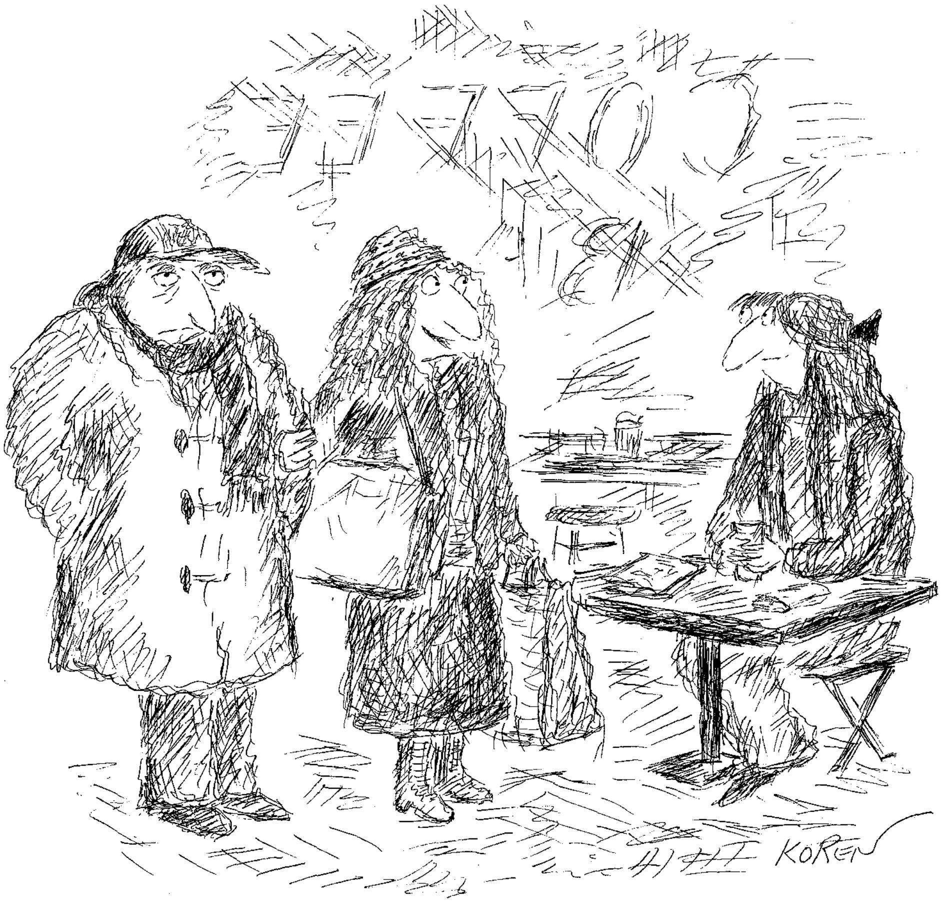


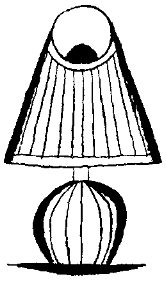
"Howard is my second husband once removed."

• •

fact is that there are no political parties anymore—at least, not in any sense that Bill Daley's father would recognize. The national organizations function as little more than machines for the raising and distribution of "soft" money. The party chairmen are selected for their abilities as fundraisers, for their talents as television pitchmen, and for their acceptability to their party's various voting blocs. The Democratic Party is so fragmented—between the New Democrats and the Old Democrats, between the increasingly liberal congressional wing and the increasingly conservative White House, between the black Southern branch of the Party and what is left of the Party's former core, the Dixiecrats and the Northern ethnics—that it is necessary to have two chairmen: Connecticut's Senator Christopher Dodd, for the liberals, and the former South Carolina Democratic chairman Don Fowler, for the conservatives. The idea that party leaders might still function, as in the past, as political bosses is an anachronism. When I asked party operatives at the Republican National Committee if there was anything that their chairman, Haley Barbour, could do to prevent the outcome of the primaries that the committee most dreads—a Buchanan victory—they were bemused. "If Haley tried to do one thing, to alter anything in the slightest, he'd be a dead duck," one said. "They'd all come after him with knives. They'd kill him." Another said, "If Haley called Pat Buchanan and asked him to drop out of the race for the good of the Party, the only thing that would happen would be that Buchanan would issue a press release telling about it."

In the absence of effective organizations enforcing unity and purpose, the parties have become mere temporary shelters for an increasingly diverse and ever-shifting array of voters and voting groups. In July of 1994, the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, in Washington, D.C., conducted a national survey of three thousand eight hundred voters and concluded that the two major parties had splintered into a multiplicity of subgroups, all of which derived their primary political identity not from either party as a whole but from their own subgroup. The Times Mirror study broke down the Republicans into antigovernment, pro-business "enterprisers," religious and culturally conservative "moralists," and libertarians. Aligned with the Democrats were liberal "seculars" (college-educated urban and suburban sophisticates), centrist New Democrats, old New Dealers, and "the partisan poor." Between the two parties the survey identified a "detached center," dominated by what it called "new economy independents," which is to say those anxious middle-class jobholders who account for nearly twenty per cent of the total registered vote and support whoever best addresses their concerns at the moment. The Times Mirror study did find one common thread: a conviction that the politicians whom they had elected to office were not serving their interests.

Against this backdrop, the upheavals of 1992, 1994, and 1996 can be seen not as oddities but as inevitabilities. The fracturing of the two-party structures gave birth to the insurgency candidacies of Buchanan and Forbes, just as it fostered the ascent of Bill Clinton and of the freshman class of the 104th Congress. Tony Blankley, the press secretary to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, argues, "To me, it is the most obvious thing in the world that we are, as a political nation, probably still in the early stages of a fairly serious transformation of our political landscape, which could conceivably end up with three parties—traditional left, traditional conservative, and a third populist party. Something is going on at the deep levels of political tectonics. A country cannot go through the cultural changes this country is going through without a more substantial political manifestation than we have had to date. This sustained and growing alienation between the public and the people whom it elects is going to be the central dynamic of politics for the next ten years or more. Until there is a rectifying of the disjunction between the political class and the public, we are going to go through more of these unpredicted events."



WHAT Blankley is talking about has been abundantly evident in the disparity between the voters' reaction to the ideas that have been advocated by Forbes and Buchanan and the outraged horror that these ideas have generated in most of the establishment press. As national surveys show, a great many voters are attracted to the ideas that they have been hearing from the candidates whom the Fourth Estate regards as beyond the fringe. These voters think that a flat tax, or some sort of radical simplification of the tax system, makes sense. They want illegal immigration stopped. They believe that the new world economic order, or what the labor analyst Richard Rothstein calls "the global hiring hall," is indeed making transnational corporations and Wall Street capitalists rich at the expense of American workers. They think that moneyed interests have corrupted politics. They are dubious about the increased use of American soldiers as international peacekeepers. They believe that the United States should get tougher with Japan, China, and other trade competitors. They regard affirmative action as reverse discrimination and the welfare system as immoral. They believe that the media, Hollywood, and academe are hostile to their values. They are distressed by gay marriages, strongly oppose out-of-wedlock births, and would like to see at least some limits on abortion. They believe that these positions are legitimate, regardless of whether they violate party orthodoxies or the mainstream media's sense of propriety. They are angry that their views have been ignored and derided.

Cleta Deatherage Mitchell, a former Democratic state legislator in Oklahoma, is the Washington, D.C., director of Americans Back in Charge, an activist group pushing for congressional-

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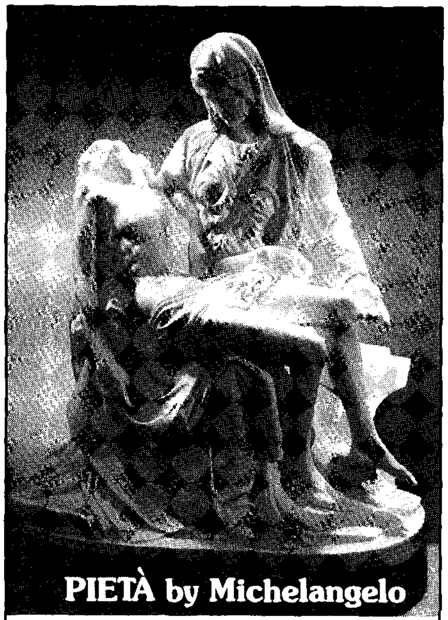
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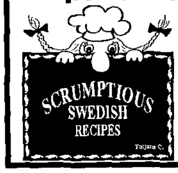

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term limits and a balanced-budget amendment. She argues that the rise of political figures like Buchanan and Forbes is the logical outcome of the breakdown of the political dialogue in America. Two disjointed conversations have emerged: an angry and demanding one taking place among the public at large, and one among the élites, who refuse to take the public conversation seriously. "People keep asking themselves, 'If we want these things, why won't the people who are supposed to represent us do them for us?' " Mitchell says. "You look at everything the public supports, and the people here in Washington say, 'I know you think you want this, but here are fifteen reasons it will never work.' It's the eat-your-peas approach to government. Well, everybody is tired of this attitude of 'I told you so.' With all the money taken from people in taxes, people are tired of living in a country where the schools are rotten and the highways are broken and the streets aren't safe."

IT'S entirely possible that Dole, although he is a staggeringly weak campaigner, will be able to stave off the challenges of Buchanan and Forbes, and go on to win the Republican nomination. Both of Dole's rivals are seriously flawed candidates. Buchanan is too belligerent, too coarsely insensitive, and too deliberately polarizing to win a majority of any national electorate. He comes across as a segregationist to the core: not merely protective of his own values but contemptuous of the values of all those who are different from him; not just an America-firster but a white-Christian-firster. As for Forbes, I suspect that the world he lives in is far too privileged and insulated for him to be able to sustain mass appeal. Can a man who, as the *Times'* Richard L. Berke has put it, was born with an entire silver place setting in his mouth connect with voters who are frightened that next week's paycheck may be the last? Nevertheless, it is not by chance that two candidates who did unexpectedly well in the early primaries have waged campaigns driven by ideas. The candidates who have done unexpectedly poorly—Dole, the Texas senator Phil Gramm, and the former Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander—have offered, respectively, no ideas, old ideas, and gimmicky ideas. Whatever the fates of Buchanan and Forbes this year, they represent the future, and not just of Republicanism but of American politics.

Since the nineteen-sixties, the Republican and the Democratic Parties have been competing for majority status, but neither has managed to go much beyond its base market share. The Republicans have dominated the White House, and the Democrats have dominated Congress. The reason lies in each party's natural mixture of strengths and weaknesses. The Republicans appeal to voters on social and cultural issues (crime, welfare, family values) but lose them by championing a laissez-faire economic philosophy. The Democrats appeal to voters by trying to protect the working classes from the buffetings of commerce but lose them on the values front. Sooner or later, either the Republicans or the Democrats are going to cobble together an amalgamated philosophy that combines the strengths of each party's agenda, offering voters one-stop economic and cultural shopping. The process is already haltingly under way on the leading edge of each party. Both Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich, in their different ways, have been groping toward this synthesis for years, but have found progress within their parties to be slow and painful. If the two parties continue to resist change, dissatisfied Republicans and dissatisfied Democrats from the splintered shells of both houses will coalesce and form the next majority party.

The idea of a majority party built on the economic values of wage earners, the cultural values of churchgoers, and the social values of middle-class families is not a novelty. There has already been such a party. It was called the Democratic Party, and it held the majority of American voters for four decades. ◆

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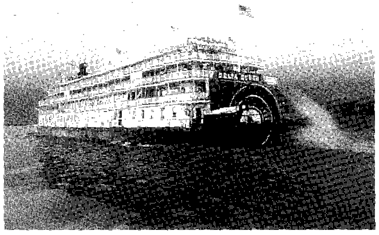

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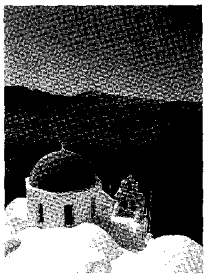

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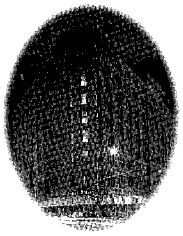

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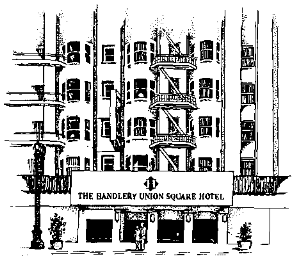
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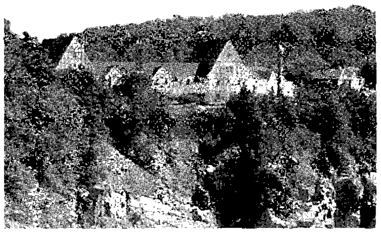

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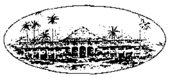

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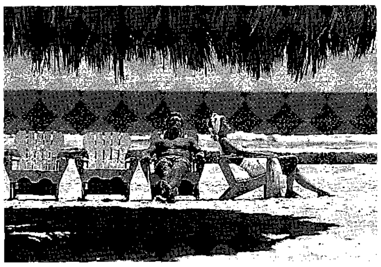

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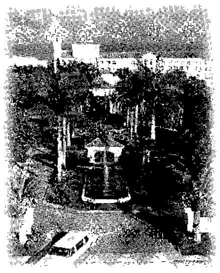

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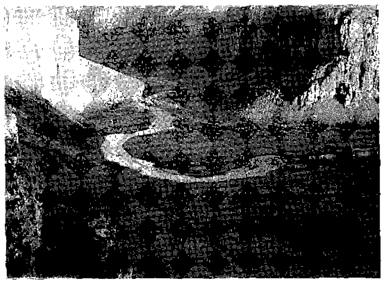

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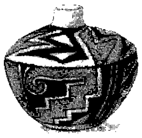

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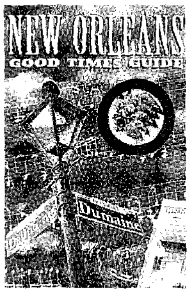

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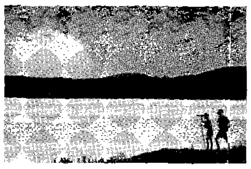

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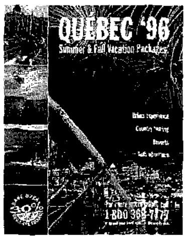

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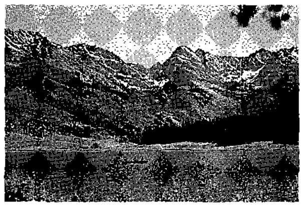

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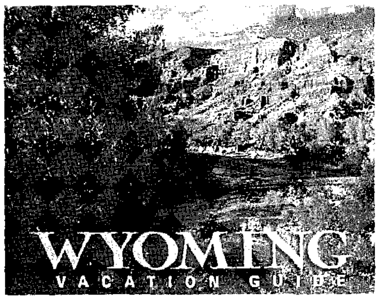

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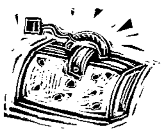

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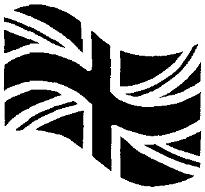

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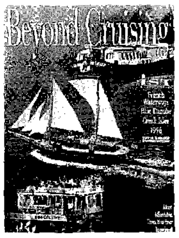

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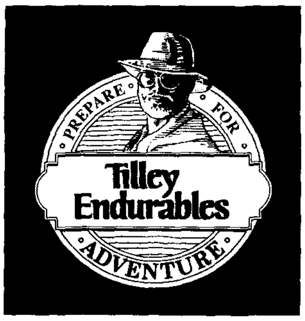

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LETTER FROM RUSSIA

GORBACHEV'S LAST HURRAH

Whatever Mikhail Gorbachev thought he was going to achieve, it wasn't this: just three months before the election, the Communists lead, and he is cast as a historical joke. Now he wants to return to power.

BY DAVID REMNICK

I—THE VIEW FROM ELBA

EVERY weekday morning, Mikhail Gorbachev leaves his dacha outside Moscow, gets into the back seat of a Volga sedan, and, on the way downtown to his office, surveys the contours of the new Russian world. Billboards and beggars. Strip joints and traffic jams. A small fascist parade. Neon brightness and construction everywhere: a quarter-billion-dollar cathedral rising on the Moscow River embankment; an underground shopping mall burrowing in outside the gates of the Kremlin.

It has been more than four years since the leaders of the union republics dissolved the Soviet Union and declared Gorbachev's job moot. On December 21, 1991, leaders of eleven republics put together a retirement package for him that included a small house in the countryside, office space for a foundation in town, and a pension now worth a hundred and forty dollars a month. The nominal leader of the group, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, drank heavily throughout the session, and, in time, his head slumped to the desk; once in a while, he would raise his head, mutter the phrase, "What you say is right," and then fall off again into a stupor. At the end of the meeting, he had to be helped from the room.

"This is terrible! Who's ruling Russia?" Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian asked one Yeltsin aide, Galina Starovoitova. "How are you going to live? We don't envy you."

Gorbachev was the last General Secretary of the Communist Party and the first—and last—President of the Soviet Union. He resigned Christmas Night, 1991—an event that marked the end of Soviet history. His fate, unique in a thousand years, was to be a retired czar, free to accept plaudits and lecture fees abroad, free to suffer the disdain of a people he did so much to liberate. For their part, the republican leaders divvied up the perquisites of traditional Kremlin power: the private jets and limousines, the communications systems and palaces, twenty-seven thousand nuclear warheads. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was probably inevitable, but the haste and vanity of those who dissolved it was extraordinary. Although they portrayed themselves to their people as national heroes, many had supported or were, at least, ready to knuckle under to the leaders of the August, 1991, coup attempt. In time, the leaders of states like Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Turkmenistan would establish authoritarian regimes more severe than anything seen in the Soviet Union since the days of Andropov and Chernenko. Yeltsin would bloody a record of liberal reform and political bravery with corruption, war, and retreat.

Change comes so quickly in modern Russia that four years is an epoch, and what Gorbachev sees from the car window on his rides to the office on Leningradski Prospekt no longer stuns him: not the marble-and-glass banks, not the bulletproof limousines, not the Museum of the Revolution, where old men now come to pawn their busts of Lenin and Western tourists buy them for a laugh. "Shocked?" Gorbachev says. "What on earth could ever shock me now?"

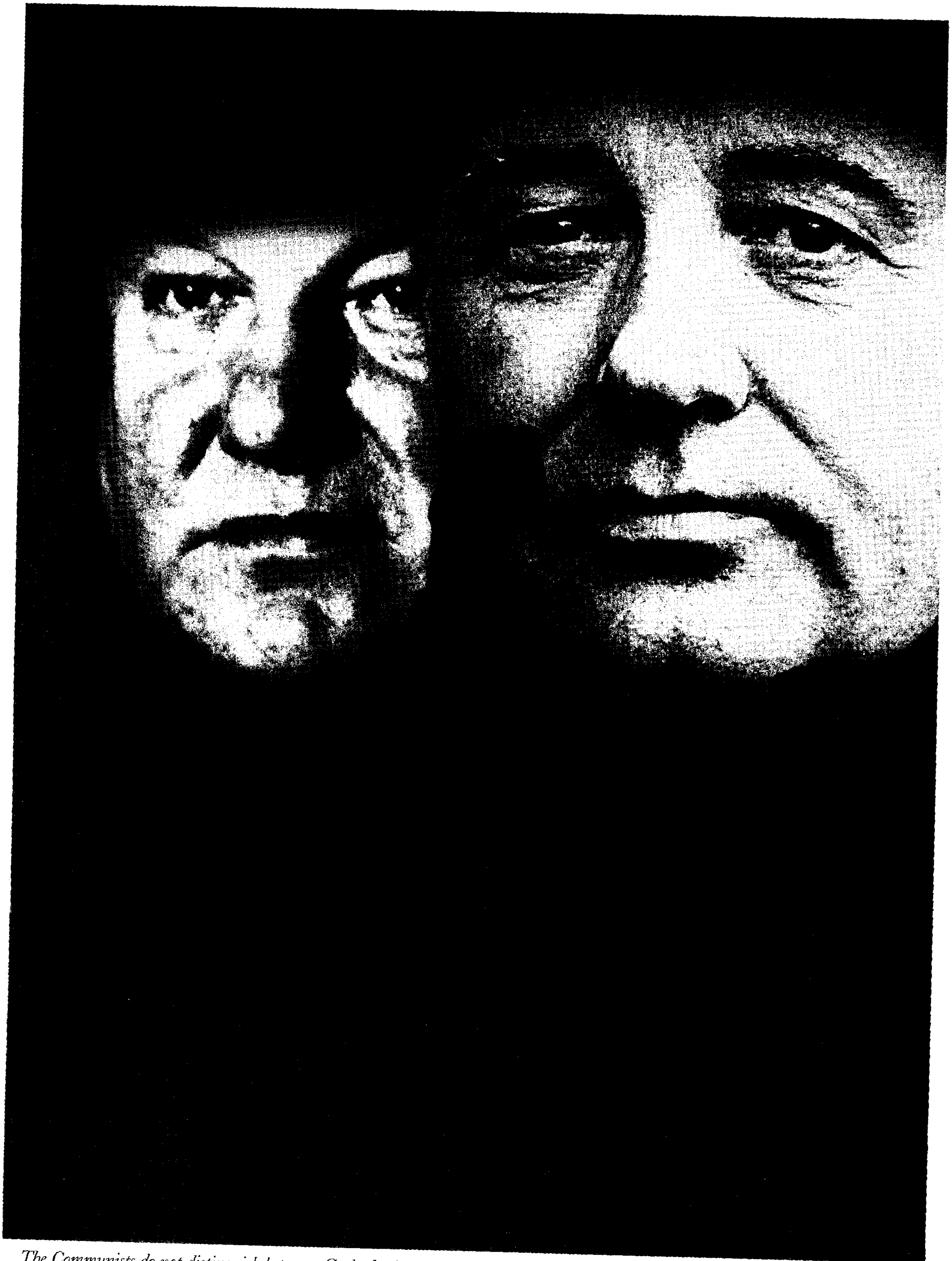
At first, Gorbachev was humiliated by his abrupt eclipse. Every time Yeltsin, his successor and antagonist, slighted him, every time the media failed to show him the respect that was once his due, Gorbachev suffered. Invariably, he took his suffering public. Talking to a clutch of reporters, his face would redden, his syntax would become garbled until his speech was a stream of pure rage. His aides learned to soothe him or, barring that, avoid him. But that, too, changed with time. Anatoly Chernyayev, who remains after ten years Gorbachev's most trusted aide, told me, "When Mikhail Sergeyevich first came to the foundation after leaving power, he would be mortified when things were published about the supposed grandeur of his house, about how he supposedly squirrelled away for himself the Party's gold reserves. All that nonsense. But he has adapted. He realized that under the conditions of free expression he has to expect that kind of thing. He holds it all in contempt, but he tries to ignore it."

It is not easy. A few years ago, Andrei Razin, the lead singer for a pop band called Sweet May, duped Gorbachev's ailing mother into selling her house in Privolnoye, a village in southern Russia. Razin then gave an interview to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* accusing Gorbachev of abandoning his mother—and this, Razin declared, is "even more immoral when it is being done by a person who used to claim the role of leader of the entire Russian nation." Gorbachev, who was born in Privolnoye, where his grandfather was the chairman of the local collective farm, was enraged by Razin and the bad publicity. But anger did him no good. He was reduced to taking Razin to court to annul the sale.

To the young, Gorbachev is now a figure of fun. One of the biggest hits of 1995, the music that seemed to blare from every taxi radio, was a techno-pop song by the group Gospodin Dadudа (Mr. Dadudа). As a synthesizer throbs in the background, there is a hilarious interplay between a woman in a state of sexual ecstasy and "Gorbachev"—complete with southern accent and grammatical tics—who intones some of the great man's best-known clichés:

> "In the village, cattle mortality rates are up."
> (*Orgasmic cries*)
> "I understand your reaction."

ILLUSTRATION BY MIRKO ILIC; LEFT PHOTO: FRANCO ORIGLIA/SYGMA; RIGHT PHOTO: STIG STASIG/2. MAJ/IMPACT VISUALS.



The Communists do not distinguish between Gorbachev's socialism with a human face and Yeltsin's populism: they despise them both.

(*Orgasmic cries*)
"And this is the main thing."
(*Orgasmic cries*)
"Da-doo-da-doo-da."
(*Orgasmic cries*)
"We need to produce more culture."
(*Orgasmic cries*)
"And Raisa Maximovna is also aware
of it."
(*Especially loud orgasmic cries*)
"Da-doo-da-doo-da."

Has any other figure of such historical stature left the throne so easily and lived on with so little fuss? Certainly not in Russia, where monarchs died either in office or were shot. Khrushchev, after he was overthrown by Brezhnev, in 1964, was banished to a K.G.B.-monitored dacha in the woods outside Moscow and was not allowed to publish or pronounce on the politics of his successors. Gorbachev, by contrast, publishes constantly. His "Life and Reforms," a new two-volume memoir, is available in Russian and German. (The English edition, according to Doubleday, is having "translation problems.") In Moscow, few people seem terribly interested. The books are expensive and the sales paltry.

Gorbachev left office saying that he was not "going off to the taiga," but no one imagined that he would ever return to politics. It wasn't just a matter of age and the futility of a second act; politics in Russia have changed, and though Gorbachev was the master of the one-party system, its true Nijinsky, he has always avoided testing himself in the electoral system that he did so much to create. And yet, at the age of sixty-five, he still dreams of a return to power, a redemption. Last week, Gorbachev said he was "internally ready" to run for President and could make a formal declaration later this month.

The Presidential race for June, 1996, is wide open—terrifyingly so—and none of the contenders, not the Communist Gennady Zyuganov, not the nationalists Vladimir Zhirinovsky and Aleksandr Lebed, not the liberal Grigory Yavlinsky, not even Yeltsin himself, can be considered prohibitive favorites. The Communists swept the December parliamentary elections, and the revived Party is the one party in Russia with a sizable membership base, grass-roots organization, and a viable set of myths. Zyuganov, however, is a former mid-level Central Committee apparatchik and looks it. Zhirinovsky continues to attract support, but it is doubtful whether a majority of the electorate would vote for a man who promotes a fascist ideology and in his time in parliament has slugged a woman deputy and posed naked in the shower for photographers. Lebed, a general, is well-regarded in military circles, but he has none of the charisma of a Colin Powell: he speaks in an indecipherable grumble, which has its appeal over three words but tends to diminish at the fourth. Yavlinsky, a young economist, will win support from intellectuals in the biggest cities, but his liabilities include a self-defeating ego, a narrow political base, and a Jewish mother.

Yeltsin, who began his campaign last month, remains a formidable politician, especially since he will be able to exploit the tools of Kremlin power during the race—paying off unpaid wages, perhaps even ending the Chechen war—but it is hard to imagine that he has not ruined himself by now. The crime rate, rampant corruption, the war in the Caucasus, and his own failing health are not a prescription for victory. A number of Yeltsin's hard-line advisers, who fear for their own political future and access to the financial trough, are telling him to call off, or postpone, the election, and that is still a possibility.

Not that any of this will help Gorbachev. He is despised by the Communists, who regard him as no better than the C.I.A.; despised by the "great power" nationalists, who believe he is responsible for the humiliation of a great power and its army; and despised by liberal democrats, who feel he never fully shed his allegiance to the *nomenklatura* that raised him. Gorbachev's rating in the opinion polls rarely goes higher than one per cent. I spoke with a number of people from his old inner circle, and none of them were eager to see their man run.

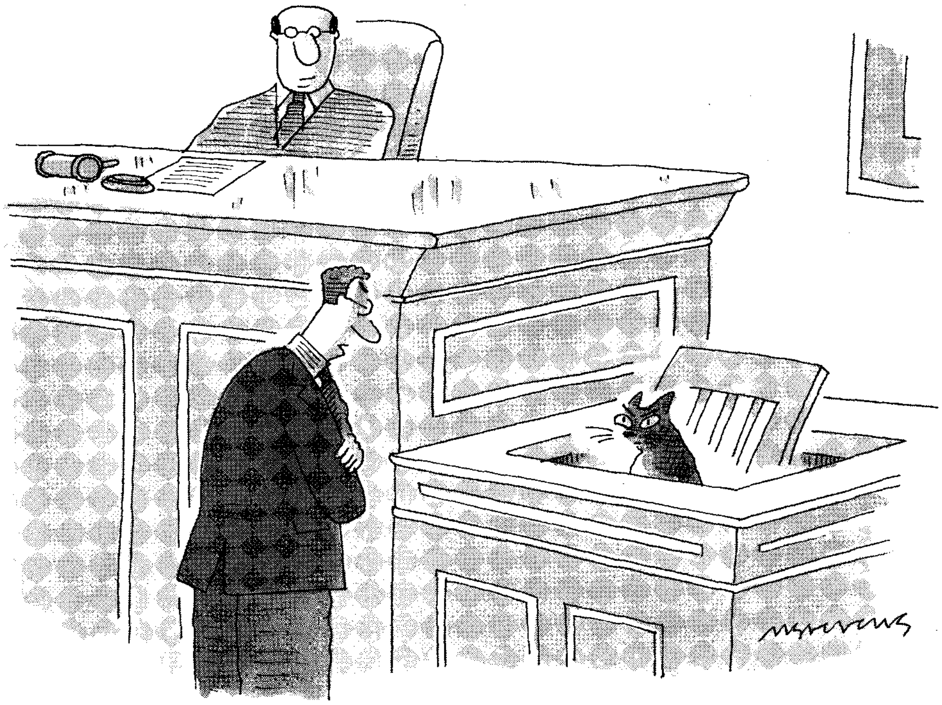
"Gorbachev is a great historical figure, and this is known all over the world, but he has achieved enough," the loyal Chernyayev told me one afternoon at the Gorbachev Foundation. "He should live up to the level of his historical greatness and not stoop to the level of campaign bickering. Maybe he could run and win in a normal country. But that will take maybe twenty years. Maybe he should wait and run then."

Gorbachev is not through desiring. Aleksandr Gelman, a playwright and a friend of the former President's, told me, "Gorbachev is a cunning man, but without power he is also totally demoralized. He can't imagine himself without power. It's almost as if he's gone mad. He won't run for the Duma, but he is serious about running for the Presidency. Which is too bad. The role of an ex-President is an important enough one. If only Yeltsin would join Gorbachev in the ranks of the ex-Presidents, this would be a great gain for a fledgling democracy. I saw Gorbachev a few months ago and he told me that he gets a lot of letters telling him he should run for President. I said, 'Why should you run? Why do you need this? You've done enough.' But he is a difficult man. He wants to move back into power. As a writer, I am very interested in this quality, the way that the yearning for power can blind a man."

After meeting with Chernyayev at the foundation, I walked up a set of marble stairs to Gorbachev's office. The building once housed a rather obscure department of the Party and there are still some of the old-style columns and drapes, the same red runner carpets that the Party used to install in the days of Stalin. After several battles with Yeltsin's staff, Gorbachev has lost office space. He is starting to get squeezed. Kids from a business school down the hall stroll past his door and think nothing of it.

Unlike Yeltsin, who is looking more befuddled and decrepit every day (not long ago, a film crew captured him removing money from his pocket and staring at the bill with utter confusion), Gorbachev seems, if anything, revived. When I saw him, he looked fit, tanned, and trim. His wife, Raisa, is also well; she has recovered from the stroke she suffered during the coup attempt. Gorbachev wore a dark-blue Italian-made double-breasted suit. The long rest suited him, and it did not take him long to explain what he planned to do with his new reserve of energy.

"When I travel around Russia, I find that the cliché that Gorbachev has been forgotten is overturned," Gorbachev told me. "Everyone who travels with me sees what goes on, despite the opposition to these trips from Moscow. Recently, I went to Cheboksary, on the Volga, and Yeltsin's people called the local leadership and asked them to limit my contacts there. But I met with all the press there: Communists, non-Communists, reformist, non-reformist, and they all wrote about me. I answered questions on the air for an hour. Some of the university rectors tried to deny me an auditorium. Under student pressure, the university president gave me the concert hall and instead of fifteen hundred people *twenty-five* hundred people came. Not just students but Communists and Zhirinovsky people, too! Everyone! I answered questions for three hours. I met with workers there, too. They came up to touch me and test whether Gorbachev is still alive. They said, 'How is your health, Mikhail Sergeyevich?' And I replied, 'My health is just as you see it.' Then they'd say, 'Well, do you have the guts to run? One more time?' And they would look me right in the eye."



"Isn't it true that you did not love the victim, as you claim, but, in point of fact, feigned affection for the sole purpose of obtaining tuna fish?"

This was not the first time I had met with Gorbachev in his retirement, and, sitting there in his bare and nearly bookless office and listening to him once more, I had the sense that his vanity, charm, and self-delusion were wisdom itself. He has the gift. You sit across from Gorbachev and react with an idiot's awe, a fixed smile, intermittent nods of agreement. He takes you in before you've had a chance to sort through what he's actually said.

Tolstoy, for one, would have understood the power of Gorbachev's personality, even while struggling to diminish its importance. Tolstoy saw history in terms of forces beyond the control of any individual actor. Yet in "War and Peace" he highlights, as few other writers have, the role of personality in the shaping of historical events. His interest in history, Isaiah Berlin has written, seems to have sprung from "a bitter inner conflict between his actual experience and his beliefs, between his vision of life, and his theory of what it, and he himself, ought to be." Berlin's conclusion is that Tolstoy the artist is far more convincing than Tolstoy the thinker.

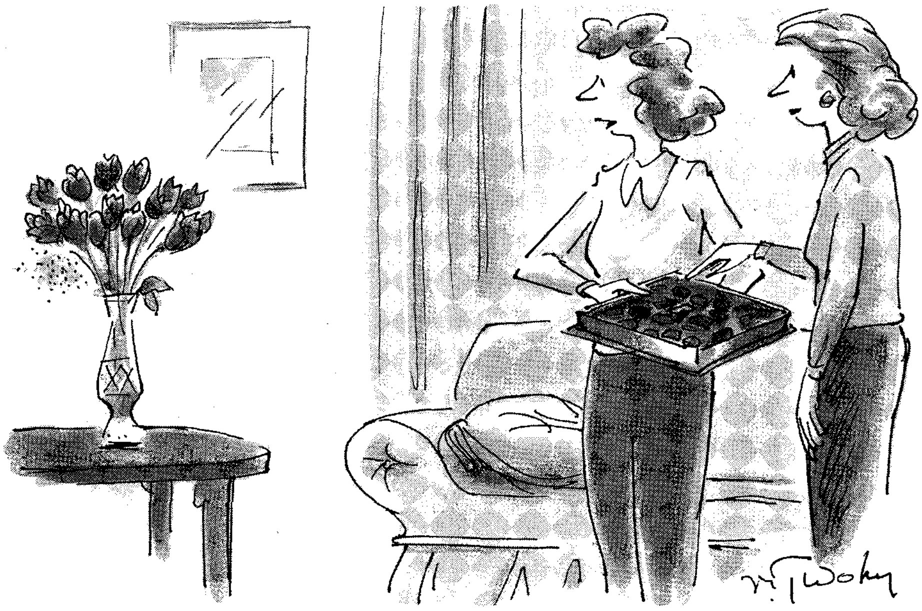
It could have been only the power of personality—a form of magic—that allowed Gorbachev to guide the Communist Party to its own crackup. Despite various forces suggesting the need for economic and technological reform, the Party did not have to take Gorbachev's radical course. Vitaly Vorotnikov, a conservative Politburo member, in his diaries—published under the title "This Is How It Was . . ."—recounts how he would sit in the meetings of the top Party leadership and listen to Gorbachev propose radical changes that everyone knew would mean the weakening, if not the end, of one-party rule. Why do we all sit still for it? Vorotnikov wondered. Why do we all vote our assent? He and the rest still ask themselves the same questions.

When I asked one of Gorbachev's key conservative rivals in the Politburo, Yegor Ligachev, how it could have happened, he sneered. "Mikhail Sergeyevich played us for dupes," Ligachev said. "When we caught on, it was too late."

To Gorbachev's allies, his deceptiveness, his instrumental amorality, was his political talent. "Gorbachev is a figure who refutes the law that by evil means no good can be done," said the playwright Aleksandr Gelman, who served briefly on the Party Central Committee. "He lied to his circle of Communist Party people. He had a double personality. He was two-faced to nearly everyone. Next to Gorbachev, Ligachev was a moral genius. Ligachev, after all, said what he thought and was clear about his principles. Gorbachev had to operate among people who would have killed him had they known what he was really up to. And sometimes Gorbachev deluded himself, too. So, on the basis of classic moral principles, Gorbachev was a bad man, a dishonest man. But what he achieved was enormous."

Gorbachev himself is entirely aware of the power he exerted over other people. "I think a lot of it is about human nature," he told me. "As early as boyhood, among the other kids I was always the leader. This is just a natural quality, like the curiosity I have that pushes me to get to the bottom of things. It never occurred to me to get into politics. But then when I got involved in Komsomol politics someone said, 'O.K., who here is Gorbachev?' I stood and climbed up on my chair. Then, suddenly, someone pulled the chair out from under me, and everyone laughed. That's how my career began! But my conclusion was always to get up off the floor and keep going. That's what my experience tells me."

Gorbachev's new memoirs are a fascinating chronicle of a small-town boy's rise through the only political hierarchy his country offered: the hierarchy of tyranny. Without apology, he writes of his uncanny ability to win over his superiors and make them his mentors, his willingness to stifle disagreement, and even laughter, in the presence of his age-fogged superiors. In scene after scene, Gorbachev plays the courtier to Brezhnev, who, in his dotage, was unable to frame a clear thought, much less utter one. In one episode, he describes how, in 1982, a Politburo ancient, Andrei Kirilenko, was eased into retirement only after assurances that he could keep his dacha and other perks, and



"They're from David. He's so much more considerate since I shot him."

how, when the time came for Kirilenko to sign his resignation papers, tears filled his eyes and he asked Andropov to draft the document for him. Kirilenko could barely hold the pen.

"Oh, my God! I couldn't write about everything, but Kirilenko!" Gorbachev told me, collapsing in laughter. "The man couldn't put two words together. This was, simply put, a problem. I think now, when we look back at such things years from now, we simply won't be able to imagine them."

It is hard to imagine the dinosaurs of yesteryear. And yet we might want to get started. Unlike the brontosaurs, they have returned and are roaming the Russian earth.

II—RESTORATION

LANGUAGE was a foundation of the old regime. The Communist Party controlled language absolutely (banning writers, creating the Newspeak of official doctrine and media), and, like God Almighty, gave everything its name. Brezhnev's inability to speak coherently was a fair representation of the regime's decline—imitations of the old man's garbles were comic currency in the late seventies. When Gorbachev took power, in 1985, he displayed a fluency that held out the illusion that the regime, now in command of its faculties again, could revive itself and endure.

The most important speech Gorbachev gave while he was in power came in November, 1987, on the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. In phrases that now seem painful in their obeisance to Leninist theology, Gorbachev returned to the theme of Soviet history and anti-Stalinism that Khrushchev had first raised in 1956, in his so-called secret speech. Gorbachev described Stalin's regime as "criminal" and went on from there. Even though he skimmed over numerous episodes of brutality, he had, in a public, televised forum, opened the political history—and the system—of the Soviet Union to criticism, doubt, and question. But, in spite of his intention of renewing the system, he had instigated its suicide.

Not long ago, Zyuganov, the current Communist leader, was awarded a doctoral degree. Adapted from his thesis is a ninety-five-page work of neo-Communist agitprop called "Rossiya i Sovremenni Mir" ("Russia and the Contemporary World"). His other recent books include "Derzhava" ("The Power") and "Za Gorizontom" ("Beyond the Horizon"). The gist of all three books is spelled out in a crucial speech Zyuganov gave exactly eight years after Gorbachev's 1987 history address, the occasion this time being the commemoration of the seventy-eighth anniversary of the Revolution. What was different, of course, was that the speaker was not the ideological vicar of a ruling totalitarian party but, rather, a candidate, an outsider hoping to reëstablish the power and myths of his fallen state. (The speech, entitled "The Twelve Lessons of History," was reprinted, naturally, in *Pravda*—which is now owned by a Greek industrialist.)

The root cause of the Communist resentment is not merely the recasting of economic life in Russia, the divide between rich and poor, but also the "blackening" of the Soviet past. Russian school texts have now been sufficiently revised to include a version of the Revolution that is closer to that of Richard Pipes than that of Lenin (or John Reed, for that matter). Schoolchildren read of the weakness of Nicholas II, the vacuum of power that followed his fall, and the ruthlessness of the Bolshevik seizure of power; they read a litany of cruelties as well as achievements. Zyuganov does not vow a return to censorship and the Stalinist version of history, but he is intent on battling what he insists are "criminal distortions."

"Today, one hears terrible lies—that the October Revolution was a plot, a coup," he said in his speech. "We hear it said that the Revolution was the product of several people, a limited number of people. No. The Revolution was a social earthquake that decided the most burning contradictions. . . . In the citadel of bourgeois democracy—the United States—they were singing and dancing in 1927, but in 1929 the basis of well-being completely collapsed: the private, egotistical form of existence came in complete conflict with the demands of social development. Suddenly there were millions out of work and all-powerful gangsters."

While praising the wisdom and the works of Lenin, Zyuganov paints a portrait of modern Russia as suffering privations and humiliations far worse than anything else in this century. He lays claim to privileged information, saying he has "read documents that were prepared in the darkest basements on this planet." He is therefore uniquely qualified to describe not only the triumphs of the Communist system but also the international conspiracy to sap its strength by "carrying on an arms race," to "ignite nationalism and religious extremism, and destroy the country from within," to "smash the Party and seize the media."

Zyuganov goes on, "Today, the great lie is visible. At first, there was criticism of Brezhnev, then of Stalin, leading all the way to Lenin. And today all that was glorious is eliminated." While the West used to complain about "three hundred cases" of human-rights violations, he says, it hardly cares that "eighty per cent of the people" live in poverty or that Russia is ruled by "an all-powerful mafia."

There is no doubt about who is to blame for the terrible collapse, the "administered catastrophe," as Zyuganov calls it. Of course, it is not the Communist Party itself but, rather, one of two Communist Parties. There was the heroic Party of the great cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the worker-prince Aleksei Stakhanov, the nuclear scientist Igor Kurchatov; and there was the Party of evil, of the spymasters Lavrenti Beria and Nikolai Yezhov, of Andrei Vlasov and Gorbachev. Vlasov was a Second World War general who led a band of troops that fought on the side of the Nazis. In the Russian imagination, there is no image of betrayal more vivid than that, and in Zyuganov's alternative mythology Gorbachev is Vlasov's equal.

One afternoon, I went to see Zyuganov and six other Communist leaders meet with a group of business entrepreneurs. Zyuganov habitually tailors his rhetoric to the audience: on American television and at international conferences, he plays the unthreatening social democrat, a Russian Willy Brandt, and for groups of veterans and pensioners he fires up the brimstone. Now, for these businessmen, he was like a Republican mayor at the Chamber of Commerce. He did all he could to downplay his opposition to private property and his desire to renationalize industries across Russia. But first he wanted to impress the audience with anecdotes of ruin. The democrats, he said, "offer nothing to the poor—just a line to the cemetery."

"Look, go to Tula and drive off the highway and you'll see people eating cattle fodder for breakfast," Zyuganov said. "Or in the Ivanovo region. Whole towns of four and five thousand people are fired from factories, given sixty thousand rubles"—twelve dollars—"and told to go away. Women told me they stopped waking their children in the morning, because they had nothing to feed their children for breakfast. These are not secrets from anyone. Just leave Moscow and see." Like any reporter, I have left Moscow for the provinces many times, and the fact is that Zyuganov plays with statistics, invents stories of starvation, and, in general, tries to create the impression that poverty is a post-Communist invention.

"When Gorbachev began to break the systems of control, well, these were not reforms. This turned into a real and complete genocide," Zyuganov told the businessmen. "We were promised that we would live as they do in Sweden or the United States. It turns out to be more like Colombia and will soon be like Bangladesh."

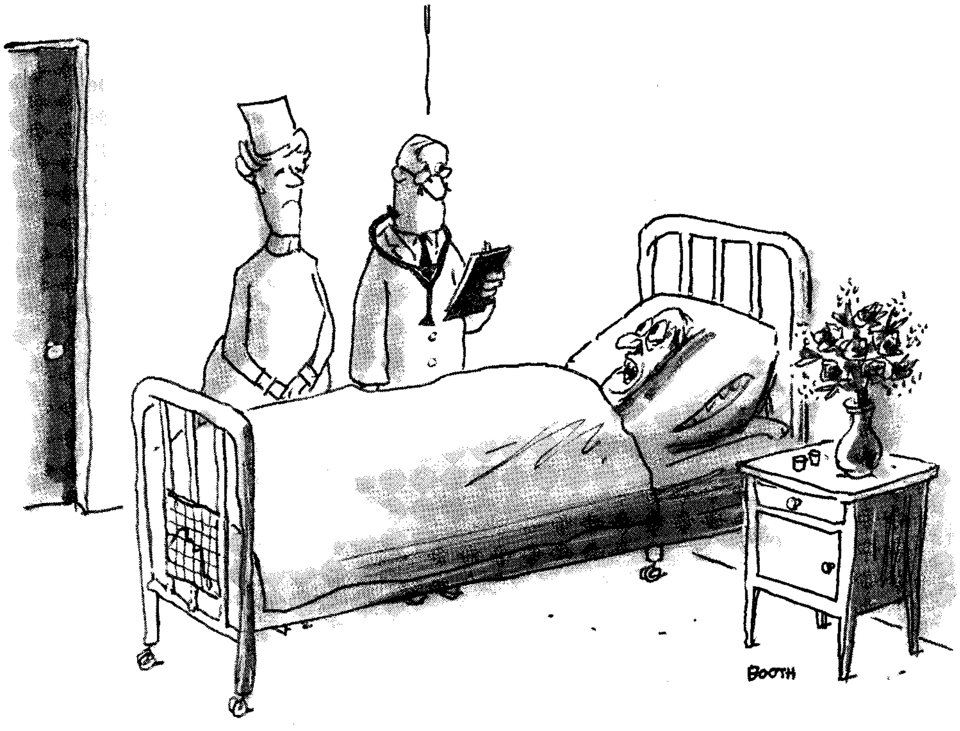
Finally, a reporter got up and said, "When people were waiting in lines for sausage, weren't you a member of the Party's Central Committee?" Zyuganov merely brushed the question away.

Zyuganov's use of the word "genocide" was especially astonishing. During the question period, I said I had seen a billboard for one of the more liberal candidates in the December parliamentary elections which said, "The fifty million victims of the civil war, collectivization, and repression would not vote for Zyuganov."

"We know from the archives of the K.G.B. that six million people were persecuted—many of them Communists, by the way!—and only about six hundred and eighty thousand were killed," Zyuganov answered. "Now, in these times, a hundred and thirty million Russians have been robbed. They will never vote for this regime. Remember, this system provided our victory over Fascism, but by the end of the fifties"—meaning under Khrushchev—"the system exhausted itself. You can't put all seventy years in one category. Even the czars lost three wars." An amazing reply. There are no reputable historians in the West or Russia who do not tally the victims of Communist rule in the tens of millions.

Zyuganov went on to prove himself a proud autodidact and a crank. "I am one of the few politicians who closely studied all philosophies, from the Greeks to the present," he said. "When I was studying the reasons for the conflict in the Caucasus, I read the Koran twice, underlining with a pencil. I read all the classical sources—not only the ones leading to 1917. I may tell you that the revolution foreseen by Marx occurred in Russia, in the Ottoman Empire, in China. In 1929, America itself collapsed. Businessmen looked for an end to this, and they found Franklin Roosevelt. Do you know what he did? He said, 'I am ready to take control, but you must pay forty out of every hundred dollars, and I'll do the reforming. If you agree, O.K. If not, we'll have what Russia had in 1917.' And so the biggest capitalists said, 'O.K., we'll do it.' "

THE structure of the new Communist Party has none of the clear lines of authority that the old Party had, nor are there ideological absolutes. While Zyuganov tries to be all things to all audiences, there are, standing behind him, varieties of Communist politicians, most



"I'd like to donate all my organs to Republicans for Bob Dole."

of them far more doctrinaire, more vengeful than he. Even some of the old names are returning. One afternoon, I went to see Gorbachev's old nemesis Ligachev. Ligachev is in his seventies, but, like some of his allies, he is trying to make a comeback on the new Communist wave. As part of the Communist attempt to resurrect the old Soviet Union, Ligachev is involved in trying to reëstablish ties between and among the Communist Parties of the fifteen nations that had been Soviet republics. I picked Ligachev up in a cab at his apartment building—a fine old place in the Lenin Hills for fine old apparatchiks—and he spent much of the ride to my place mocking Gorbachev, calling him "a spent chatterbox," an "empty suit." He said, "Gorbachev destroyed the Party, and the Party was the cementing force of the union." He went on, "And why call it an empire? What kind of empire allows for the preservation of a hundred and thirty nationalities? What sort of empire furthers their development? Let us remember that all that is left of the indigenous people of the United States is scalps and reservations. Our people were not treated this way."

At one point, in the cab, I picked up Ligachev's briefcase. It weighed no more than a baby robin. Evidently, Ligachev will not play a major role in the Restoration.

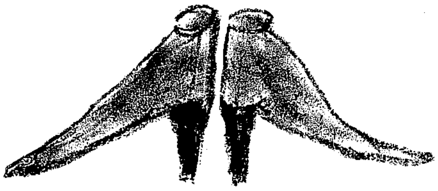
It is hard to tell who will. But if there is one figure from the old regime who plays the role of the "gray cardinal" it is Anatoly Lukyanov. Under Gorbachev, Lukyanov was a Politburo member and the chairman of the Supreme Soviet; he was also a key supporter of the August, 1991, coup. Lukyanov and Gorbachev first met at Moscow State University in the early fifties. Lukyanov was Gorbachev's protégé in the Party. After Lukyanov and the other coup plotters were released from prison, he no longer spoke of his friendship with Gorbachev, only of his hatred. When Gorbachev's name arises now, Lukyanov's face darkens, his fists clench and whiten.

Lukyanov is a member of parliament—he is chairman of the legal-affairs committee—and when I visited him at his office he greeted me the way a fighter greets his opponent in the center of the ring. He thrust out his chest and stared hard. We began with my asking about various publications in the Communist press which blamed Western intelligence agencies and their "agents of influence"—men like Gorbachev's former adviser Aleksandr Yakovlev—for the collapse of the Soviet Union. Did Lukyanov really believe that stuff?

"Are you a naïve person?" he said. (He made sure his nose was now about six inches from mine.) "I know this to be a fact. It is enough to read the Americans from John Foster Dulles through Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger. Their role in this was enormous. The West simply didn't want the competition of the Soviet Union. Geopolitically, the United States wanted to break up the Soviet Union and turn it into a raw-materials annex. This was the eternal policy of the West. They wanted to create a vast new market. They wanted to 'liberate' the market, give jobs to their unemployed, and use our people for cheap labor. And still the Americans are producing ten times more weapons than ever. All the rest is superficial. The West even managed to lead on young, inexperienced Soviet politicians who could be bought with nice words. It was enough in 1984 for Margaret Thatcher to praise Gorbachev, and he became theirs. And sitting next to Gorbachev was Yakovlev, who had spent a decade in Canada as Ambassador, where he became a rabid anti-Communist. I have known Gorbachev for forty years and Yakovlev for thirty. I know these men."

While Lukyanov was in power, he was always next to Gorbachev, forever reminding reporters of their great partnership in perestroika. After the coup collapsed, he begged for Gorbachev's indulgence. But now he portrays their relationship in quite a different way: as a wise counsellor failing to sway a foolish regent.

"All that happened with Gorbachev could have been predicted at the end of 1990," Lukyanov went on. "He was a confused politician. He was like a child who refuses to see that some stories have scary endings. I knew by April, 1991, that all this would end in arrests and catastrophe. But what happened in August, 1991, was not a coup, not a plot. It was an attempt to save the country, and that is all. In Gorbachev we were dealing with a politician who was out of his depth, a man who had never known anything except Komsomol politics and Party politics. In me, you are talking to a man who worked as a turner at a factory in 1943. Gorbachev was just a functionary given to great outbursts of suggestions and then irresponsible implementation. He was a brilliant actor."



But surely Gorbachev wanted to preserve the union? Was he to blame for its collapse?

Lukyanov smiled, indulging once more the naïveté of his visitor. "Gorbachev could have stopped it all," he said. "Belovezhskaya Pushcha"—the hunting lodge where the leaders of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine first declared an end to the union—"is just a few kilometres from the Polish border. It would have been enough just to give them a little shove and they would have all fled to shelter under Lech Walesa. Gorbachev was never a master at seeing three steps ahead. But he knew the collapse was coming. He could have acted decisively. But he was so naïve he thought these people would have mercy on him."

Like Zyuganov, Lukyanov said that fewer than a million people were killed under Communist rule. But he took his mythology of the past a step further. He said it was "obvious" that the Yeltsin regime had exceeded all others in the degree of its cruelty. But, of course, the blame for all that had gone wrong ultimately rested with the man who loosened the reins in the first place: Gorbachev.

Before leaving, I asked Lukyanov about Gorbachev's potential return to politics.

Lukyanov grinned. Maniacally. "Before he thinks about his future and running for President, Gorbachev ought to try walking the streets of Moscow and let's see if he comes back in one piece," he said. "He needs to get out among workers and farmers and see if he returns in one piece. Let him visit a military base and see if he can come back in one piece. Then we'll talk about running for President. You see, sooner or later there will be a trial. Do you know how Gorbachev will persist in people's memories? As the destroyer of the Soviet Union. Nothing more. Just that. Yeltsin will be the man who fired on the parliament. Nothing more."

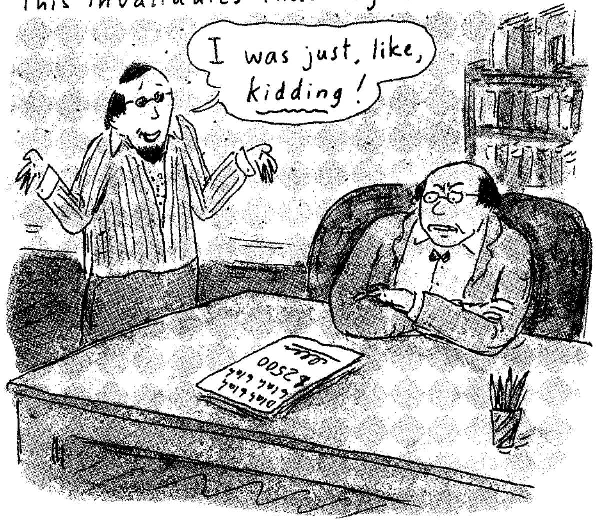
And you, Anatoly Ivanovich? How will you be remembered? I asked.

"Me?" he said. "I will be the man who realized his power too late, who, together

PUBLISHING CLAUSES OF THE '90s

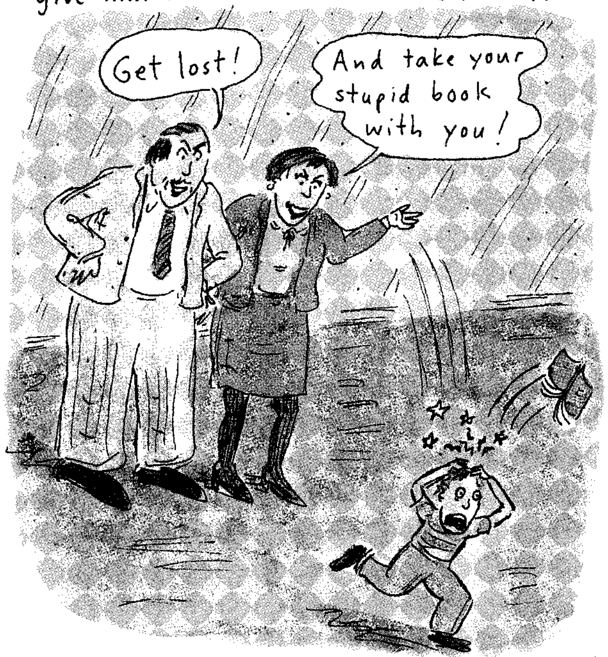
The Sudden-Big-Shot Clause

If author should suddenly become a star after signing for a tiny advance, this invalidates that agreement.


I was just, like, kidding!

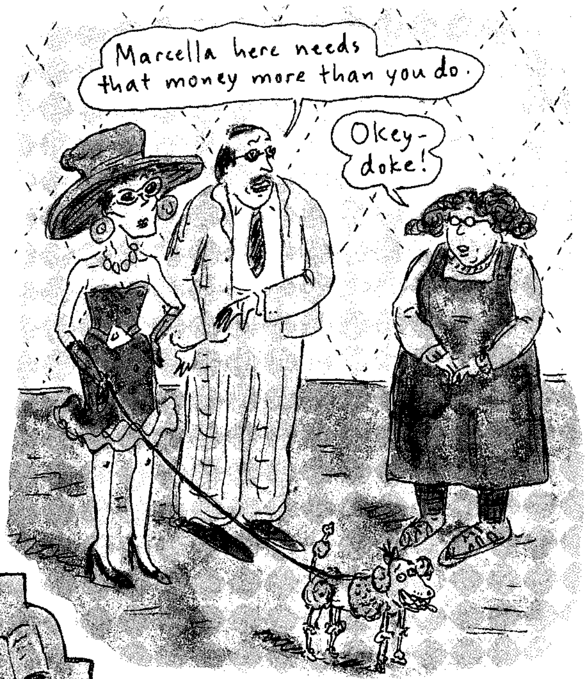
The Bum's-Rush Clause

If, on the other hand, author's stock should tumble, publisher is free to give him or her the old heave-ho.


Get lost!
And take your stupid book with you!

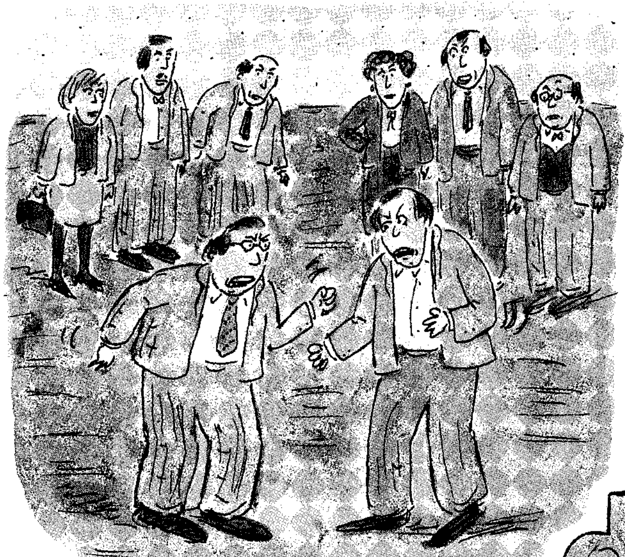
The Who-Said-Life-Was-Fair Clause

Should a TV personality need a multi-million-dollar advance, it will come from the pockets of the Poetry Division.


Marcella here needs that money more than you do.
Okey-doke!

The Complete-Freedom Clause

Publisher and author can do whatever they need to do to one another, and may the best litigant win.



with some others, was responsible for letting happen what happened. I should have been more resolute."

LOCUS SOLUS

Though they work hard to illuminate the path for us
that leads to what's such fun to call
our lonely task—ingesting, evacuating, or
coming around furious
to the justice of it all—

the unshriven but discreet, almost transcendental
intercessors of deep space—red
giants, white dwarfs, globular
clusters hanging in the cosmic vineyard—
find their rays deflected by

the arsonist panting on the rug,
the junior partner planting a bug,
the beautifully upholstered mug-

ger rekindling in front of a mirror,
the vigilante flying off to Venice
for two quick sets of tennis
at the Pro-Am Celebrity Tournament there.

Strange luck, and even worse timing:
being here and tossed on the beach,

III—EMPIRE DREAMS

On a dismal winter afternoon, I took the subway out to the northern fringe of Moscow to watch Zyuganov work a crowd of faithful constituents. At the Polyarni movie theatre, several hundred people, most of them past retirement age, filled the seats and the aisles. The theatre was warm enough, but, in customary Russian style, everyone kept on his coat and hat. The place had a steamy, wet-wool smell. When Zyuganov arrived, we all stood. The "Internationale" played on the loudspeakers and, in this crowd, nearly everyone still knew the words—and sang.

Older voters are Zyuganov's most visible supporters, but they are far from alone. The Party has been able to revive itself not because of any individual but, rather, because it is the one political organization with a resonant mythology. In its electoral programs and in its newspapers, the Party combines elements of the old ideology (collectivism, social equality) and elements of the nationalist agenda (the reëstablishment of Russia as a rival to the United States, the restoration of the Soviet Union, an allergy to foreign influences). Several years ago, Western-leaning liberals feared a Red-Brown coalition—a Communist-nationalist entente. The Communist Party has instead succeeded in adapting the most salable features of the nationalists without having to make peace with the likes of their most visible (and preposterous) leader, Zhirinovsky.

The rise of Zyuganov and the Communists also represents a battle for property and economic interests. Under Yeltsin, the élites that have thrived have been those former Party chieftains who were wise enough—and fast enough—to get into the favored businesses of oil, natural gas, precious metals, and banking. Getting rich in the new Russia—as in the old—requires government connections, government favors: witness the natural-gas giant, Gazprom, which has as its protector and patron none other than the prime minister (and former oil-and-gas minister), Viktor Chernomyrdin. It is widely believed that Chernomyrdin has made himself one of the richest men in the country. Zyuganov's economic supporters come from the sector of the economy that has known only failure: heavy industry, the military-industrial complex, the enormous plants that churn out steel, machine tools. These élites care little for the old Communist ideology, but they see in Zyuganov a patron who will do for them what Yeltsin did for the energy and banking industries. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the manufacturing and industrial sectors lost their bearings, their subsidies, their equilibrium. Now they expect Zyuganov not to reverse the trend of privatization but, rather, to make the trend, at long last, work for them.

Zyuganov is what highly educated Russians refer to as a lumpen intellectual. After coming to Moscow from the provincial city of Orel, he worked for years as a mid-level functionary in the Central Committee's ideological bureaucracy. He did not especially distinguish himself there. He has surfaced as a leader mainly because the best and the brightest of the Party have long since retired or defected—to the Yeltsin camp, to business, or to other profitable ventures. Zyuganov, however, persisted, leading the Communist flank in parliament during the crisis of October, 1993, and in the reorganization of a national Communist Party. Provincial leaders in cities all around Russia remained in contact with Zyuganov and are now out of the closet about their loyalties. In the city of Tambov, the regional leaders openly defy Moscow, flying a red flag over the local government building—a gesture not unlike the Alabama legislature flying the Confederate flag. Many other cities can hardly wait to follow suit.

At the Polyarni theatre, Zyuganov unleashed his standard speech: his travelogue across "this long-suffering country," his description of how the United States destroyed the Soviet Union with "lies, provocations, and money." Yeltsin, of course, came in for a beating, but Gorbachev did no better. "Gorbachev is responsible for the banditry in this country," Zyuganov said. "He is responsible for police having to wear bulletproof vests. Gorbachev got the Nobel Peace Prize, and for that Alfred Nobel must have spun ten times in his coffin."

While many scholars and journalists in the West see the political battles between Gorbachev and Yeltsin as the great Manichaean struggle of the late eighties and early nineties, the story line of an era, Zyuganov's Communists and the hard-

bareheaded, barefooted, shanghaied
into feeling the climbing

elastic discomfort brought on by a universe
that we now know recoils from us, retreats
and leaves us to lurk
and grope our spongy floors,
who might as well imagine ourselves
wading the shoals at some astral Dunkirk,

so irremediably has a failure of policy and honor
stranded us between (a)
the scorched wheatfields behind us,
and (b) the burning straits ahead. No wonder
nothing shines on me as I push my cat away,

scatter my clippings, and go get my mail—
the selfsame, unsolicited communication
that arrives each morning without fail
and always reads:

"Such as were caught by the undertow
perished smilingly. The rest, of course, you know
from the particulars of our previous letter."

—VIJAY SESHADRI

line nationalists see one as the extension of the other. Both men are despised for their complementary roles in destroying, first, Communist rule and, second, the empire itself. Zyuganov's followers do not distinguish between Gorbachev's socialism with a human face and Yeltsin's populism.

No matter what the angle of vision, there is no doubt that the relationship between the two men, and the effect it had on Soviet history, looms over current Russian politics. Countless empirical factors contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union—a rotting economy, a bankrupt ideology, intellectual and moral dissidence, foreign military and political pressure, and then, under Gorbachev, the catalytic effect of a little freedom, the decline of the Communist Party, the rise of nationalism, first on the "periphery" of the empire and then in Russia itself. The date of collapse was the variable, the open question.

Galina Starovoitova, a legislator in the Duma who worked closely with both Gorbachev and Yeltsin, said that if Gorbachev had not been so late to recognize and understand the nationalities crisis in the Soviet Union "the empire might have endured another thirty or fifty years." Until the last minute, Gorbachev was convinced that the nationalists were nothing more than a handful of extremists, lunatics. He dealt with the republics in the old-fashioned way: as a high-handed authoritarian, using dismissive rhetoric and, all too often, military intimidation. To fight the influence of a multiparty system, he allowed the creation of the Liberal Democratic Party (which quickly became the vehicle of Zhirinovsky). "Gorbachev was disliked on a personal, gut level, and not by Yeltsin alone," Starovoitova said. "The other republican leaders were sick of him. I heard this from Shushkevich, of Belarus, and Nazarbayev, of Kazakhstan. Kravchuk, of Ukraine, simply cursed him. Yes, they wanted him out, and the only way they could do this was to abolish his post."

So there were many factors, political and personal, conspiring against the persistence of the union. But, as Sergei Parkhomenko, one of the best-known journalists in Moscow, puts it, "The hatred between Gorbachev and Yeltsin was the engine." Gennady Yanayev, one of the leaders of the August coup, agreed: "The animal hatred between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, this was the subjective factor that played an evil trick on the nation, this is what eventually led to the disintegration of the country."

BORIS YELTSIN was not a member of Gorbachev's original inner circle. When Gorbachev came to power, in March, 1985, Yeltsin was a regional Party secretary in the Urals; it was a provincial career distinguished, above all, by his accepting the order to destroy the house where the Romanov family was executed. But, as Gorbachev was trying to build a core of support for himself in the Central Committee, his two closest political allies in the Party at the time, Nikolai Ryzhkov and Yegor Ligachev, debated the wisdom of bringing Yeltsin (a construction foreman and Party apparatchik) to Moscow from the city of Yekaterinburg (which was then called Sverdlovsk).

"I remember when I was first told about Yeltsin, I had my doubts," Gorbachev told me. "I talked about it with Ryzhkov, and he said, 'Don't take him, you'll be in trouble with him.' You see, he really knew Yeltsin from the Urals. But then the process sort of started. Ligachev was in charge of personnel, and he said, 'Let me go down and check it out.' Ryzhkov said no, but I thought maybe Ryzhkov and Yeltsin had a conflict, so I said, 'Yegor Kuzmich, go ahead and check it out.' He went and called me a few days later and said, 'Yeltsin is O.K. He's what we need. He's our man.' " Even this early incident is fraught with irony. It was Ligachev, the Party traditionalist, who became Yeltsin's fiercest enemy.

As the First Secretary of the Moscow Party organization, Yeltsin made his mark not with sophisticated political arguments or ideological speeches but, rather, through a technique utterly alien to Soviet political culture: raw populism. He began firing dozens of officials and bragged about it to the press. He visited stores and rode the Moscow Metro, and was always careful to see that the press covered the event. At least in the capital, Yeltsin competed with the General Secretary for attention.

"When Yeltsin worked as First Secretary, I didn't criticize him, or, if I did, it wasn't on a Politburo level, only on a personal level," Gorbachev said. "It was never public. But more and more I had the suspicion that he was too much about breaking things over his knee. I spoke to him about this, and said that if it ever seems that we are conducting reforms like this the question will arise, 'Can you really call these democratic reforms?' That's when the crisis arose. Also, Ligachev demanded a lot from everyone and that included Yeltsin. Yeltsin began to complain, saying, 'Why am I being castigated for every little thing? Ligachev is always trying to push me around.' Such was Yeltsin. He began to sense that he could use his populism. He would take a little tram or he'd go 'shopping' for food or meet the press. And, by the way, I supported his meetings, his openness. I did not try to change him. I wanted him to be absorbed in this process, like all of us. But he was so full of hurt feelings that he began to hold things against us sometimes. Then he'd go off and say, 'The Politburo is so old, filled with mastodons who should be fired.' But I had changed the entire Politburo. I made a clean sweep like there had never been even in Stalin's time. We had to go about these things in a proper way, not like Yeltsin thought. I think he only brought these things up to exploit them, so that he could put himself forward under this banner. They were really careerist claims. He also took it hard that he was not a full member of the Politburo. Maybe if he had had full Politburo status he would have behaved differently." Gorbachev went on, "There was something about Yeltsin, something inside him—maybe hard feelings, even vengefulness—and he still carries around these qualities. He doesn't forgive anything."

Gorbachev, of course, tells the story in a language and version totally in his favor. He was tolerant of Yeltsin, it is true, but he also turned on him quickly and cruelly when he thought the occasion demanded. In October, 1987, Yeltsin made the mistake at a closed Central Committee session of trying to challenge Ligachev's authority in the Party and what he saw as a tendency in the leadership to create a "cult" around Gorbachev. Within minutes, one speaker after another rushed to the podium to denounce Yeltsin, thus setting off the series of confrontations that defined Soviet politics for years to come.

As we talked about this old sequence of events—Yeltsin's exile, his reëmergence as the leader of the opposition and then as the first democratically elected President of Russia—Gorbachev assumed an expression of pained disgust. When the subject is Yeltsin, he cannot be stopped.

"I don't believe Yeltsin was ever really a democrat," he said. "Yes, he got incorporated into democratic and intelligentsia circles. But I think he joined with these forces deliberately and took advantage of them to break through to the top.

"When he was on the Politburo, he would write letters to me while I was on vacation telling me how disappointed he was. In Moscow, he realized he just couldn't manage. He would reshuffle personnel, disband various local Party committees. He acted as if he were still a Party chief in Yekaterinburg. But it's not the same level. Moscow is a state within a state, with all its bureaucrats and politicians watching our every move. Then he realized he was losing his grip and tried to turn a failure into a victory, to make himself seem more democratic, more pro-reform, as if he had ever been prevented from having this opportunity."

IN their opposition to Yeltsin, Gorbachev and Zyuganov would agree: the current regime began its habit of flouting the legal order when, on December 7, 1991, Yeltsin, the Ukrainian leader Leonid Kravchuk, and the Belarussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich met at Belovezhskaya Pushcha, near the Polish border, to declare the Soviet Union defunct. On the door of one of Gorbachev's aides at the foundation is a picture of Yeltsin, Kravchuk, and Shushkevich looking indecently happy. Underneath is the caption "Three split a bottle and millions get a headache."

"Remember this," Gorbachev's aide Anatoly Chernyayev said of the decision to end the union. "All these men wanted their own state. I remember Karimov, of Uzbekistan, always complained about how when an African head of state would come to Moscow he would be greeted with a red carpet and a real Kremlin reception and so on, but when he came—the leader of a place with ten times the population and a great industrial base—the reception was a yawn. So, yes, ego played a role. The union only lasted as long as it did mainly out of Party discipline, by Moscow putting ethnic Russians in charge all over, putting them in the key positions in the military and the K.G.B. and the Party. And it stayed together through force or the threat of force. But when the republics saw what had happened in Eastern Europe, when they saw that Gorbachev would not venture to use force on any scale, the disintegration process grew quicker."

The meeting in Belarus was a kind of open secret. Yeltsin told Gorbachev that the three republican leaders were expecting to go over some bilateral business—nothing of great importance.

"The idea behind the whole meeting in Belarus was: You couldn't take Gorbachev out of the country but you could take the country away from Gorbachev," I was told by the journalist Sergei Parkhomenko. "Originally, the idea was well thought out. The three countries would declare themselves founding fathers and cynically take advantage of the fact that everyone would want to be in a new Commonwealth of Independent States, that the Commonwealth was a path to paradise, to membership in the United Nations, international recognition, and access to Russia's resources. The reason these three declared themselves was that they were already U.N. countries."

A referendum on December 1st, in which ninety per cent of the Ukrainian voters chose independence, had eliminated any chance of Ukraine's forming a union with Moscow (and Gorbachev) at its center. Yeltsin had felt that a union without Ukraine was impossible. The three parties agreed that they would try another alternative, a commonwealth of sorts. They had only the vaguest notion of where they were heading. The Russian delegation wrote up nearly all the documents that would form the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States. As it became ever clearer that the men in the room would now move on without Gorbachev, the atmosphere lost its chill.

"Yeltsin got very drunk during the negotiations," according to one knowledgeable source. "Yeltsin was so drunk he fell out of his chair just at the moment that Shushkevich opened the door and let in Gennady Burbulis, Andrei Kozyrev, and the other aides. Everyone began to come into the room and found this spectacular scene of Shushkevich and Kravchuk dragging this enormous body to the couch. The Russian delegation took it all very calmly. They took him to the next room to let him sleep. Yeltsin's chair stayed empty. Finally, Kravchuk took his chair and assumed the responsibility of chairman.

"When Kravchuk finished his short speech to everyone about what had been decided, he said, 'There is one problem that we have to decide right away because the very existence of the Commonwealth depends on it: Don't pour him too much.' Everyone nodded. They understood Kravchuk perfectly."

None of the leading players will confirm this account of Yeltsin's rather buoyant and impulsive behavior in that historic session, but it is clear that Yeltsin had enough presence of mind to make sure that word of the dissolution of the union would reach Gorbachev in a way that would be maximally insulting. The group agreed that Shushkevich, by far the least significant of the three, would make the call. (Yeltsin, quick to take the role of the international player, called the American President, George Bush.) According to former American Ambassador Jack F. Matlock, Jr.,'s book, "Autopsy on an Empire," the first thing Gorbachev said to Shushkevich after getting the news about the end of the Soviet Union was "What happens to me?"

Yeltsin, in his memoir "The Struggle for Russia," wrote of his experience that day in rather elevated terms: "I well remember how a sensation of freedom and lightness suddenly came to me. . . . Russia was choosing a different path, a path of internal development rather than an imperial one. . . . Russia had chosen a new global strategy. She was throwing off the traditional image of 'potentate of half the world,' of armed conflict with Western civilization, and the role of policeman in the resolution of ethnic conflicts. . . . The Belovezhskaya agreement was not a 'silent coup,' but a lawful alteration of the existing order of things."

Not long ago, I travelled to the northern port city of Murmansk with Andrei Kozyrev. This was just a few weeks before he was forced out as Foreign Minister—part of Yeltsin's purge of liberal advisers. Kozyrev is a smooth and cautious man. He is fluent in diplo-speak in Russian, English, Spanish, and French. He rarely falters. But as we sat together on his chartered jet he betrayed a certain contempt for what had happened in Belarus four years earlier.

"Yes, it was improvised in some sense, especially by some," Kozyrev said. "For me, it was more or less a choice between trying to establish a kind of European Union and trying to keep together a former state in a confederative way. As you know, history-making is full of improvisation on the level of the heads of state. One of the issues is that they have a different level of experience. Their international experience was very limited. It boiled down to a few foreign visits and receiving two or three foreign visitors—a kind of superfluous protocol function. They had a very, very limited knowledge of foreign affairs. It did not end as well as it might have, but not as badly as it could have, either."

Was there, say, a *party* atmosphere?

"What do you mean?"

I mean was there a lot of drinking?

Kozyrev smiled broadly. "Wait until my true memoirs come out," he said.

A few days later, I met with Sergei Stankevich, a Duma deputy who had worked as a political adviser to Yeltsin in the Kremlin until 1994. While we talked, in a hotel lobby, Stankevich pointed out a hulking fellow who he assumed was a K.G.B. agent assigned to check on his meetings with foreigners.

"After August, 1991, Yeltsin sensed triumph but could not resist the temptation to humiliate Gorbachev," he said, loud enough for the K.G.B. man to hear. "It was such a horrible scene. The first thing he did was to manipulate Gorbachev so that he was completely humbled and stripped of all power. But Gorbachev would not accept his new role, and Yeltsin moved to get rid of him entirely. He had no intention of ruining the Soviet Union and he had no clear picture of what he wanted Russia to be.

"Everyone was very mysterious about the meeting in Belarus. I was not involved in its preparation. It's my understanding that a lot was improvised, but the main purpose was not the destiny of the U.S.S.R. but the destiny of Gorbachev. That was the reason they met in such secrecy. The idea of a declaration came about right there, and it was written on

ORION'S SUSPENDERS.
OUR YUPPIE DAD
ZIEGLER

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site. It was a triumph for them, and it is the custom to drink."

The poet Anna Akhmatova once said, "If you only *knew* the trash that poems come from." The lesson of the Gorbachev-Yeltsin drama seemed to be: If you only knew the trash that history comes from.

When I asked Gorbachev himself about his relationship with Yeltsin, he used a provincial Russian expression that means "to put something over on someone." He said, "Yeltsin always wanted to hang noodles on my ears."

Was the main thing to get rid of him more than to get rid of the union itself?

"I think that was the main thing, yes," Gorbachev said. "They really couldn't find another solution, so they went in for this adventurous solution. And it's because of this scheme that we're where we are now. The main thing was the destruction of the country. It just fed all fears of disintegration: social, political, cultural, and defense. It wasn't really about a drunken revel. Yeltsin actually hesitated. He was afraid of taking the step. In November, he did say there had to be a union. But there were other influences. It was in October that Burbulis went to Sochi with a memo in which he tried to prove to Yeltsin that Russia and the Russian leadership were losing the momentum they had gained after the August revolution. He said that sly old Gorbachev was spinning his web and was taking away the fruits of their victory. Russia, he said, can do without the Soviet Union because Russia is the source of all finance and resources: let everyone come and beg Russia for help, let them come to Czar Boris. Yeltsin finally believed that once he had freed himself of the other republics, having the money and the resources and the oil, he would be able to move faster and show the world what a great reformer he was. This was such shoddy thinking on his part. So superficial."

When Gorbachev was in power, he surrounded himself with aides and factions of varying ideologies. It was his conceit that he could never afford to veer in one direction for long—that he had to balance warring forces. Until the end of his time in power, he was a lonely figure. And now more than ever. When I suggested to Gorbachev that this might be the case, that he was a solitary figure who trusted only his wife and a few others, he nodded gravely.

"During a time of reform, such is the fate of the leader," he said. "As one great man once said, 'There is no such thing as a happy reformer.' Most reformers begin as reformers and then shift toward reaction. In Russian history, Alexander I was originally associated with Speransky"—a reformer—"and then ended up with Arakcheyev," a reactionary. "Napoleon had this, too. Any reformer, in making his decision, unleashes new forces and new ideas and new movements. He inevitably enters into conflict with the people of his time. He is in conflict with those in power who won't relinquish their power, and this is always complicated. Remember the French Revolution. Robespierre, two days before his execution, marched before the crowd as an idol, and then his head was cut off. So this is the fate of the politician who assumes the burden of reforms and then tries to fit in the revolutionary flow and tries to influence those new streams and tendencies. The fact is that such people make their guesses intuitively."

Gorbachev went on to say that he didn't think Yeltsin could win the June elections, and that, while he himself favored a range of "centrist" parties—not least the Gorbachev party, whatever that might be—he was not fearful of a restoration of Communist government.

"I think that this is mainly the reaction of Western politicians and press," he said. "It smells of panic. What's happening is the result of the way the democrats carried out reforms and the price people had to pay for them. The price they paid pushed them toward these neo-Communists. The cost is tremendous. I think if Americans had to pay such a cost they would have had themselves another civil war. Our people have swallowed so many wars that they have become a cautious people. Some people say that Russians are now apolitical, and are interested only in their own property and vegetable gardens. It's not so. I travel around Russia, and, even with the opposition shown by the local bosses, people rush to see me. The Russian situation is heated. Fifty-five million people do not have enough to eat every day. With few exceptions, except those who found a place in business, the rest are insecure about tomorrow. They have lost their anchor. There are no social guarantees. Un-

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AT THE GALLERIES

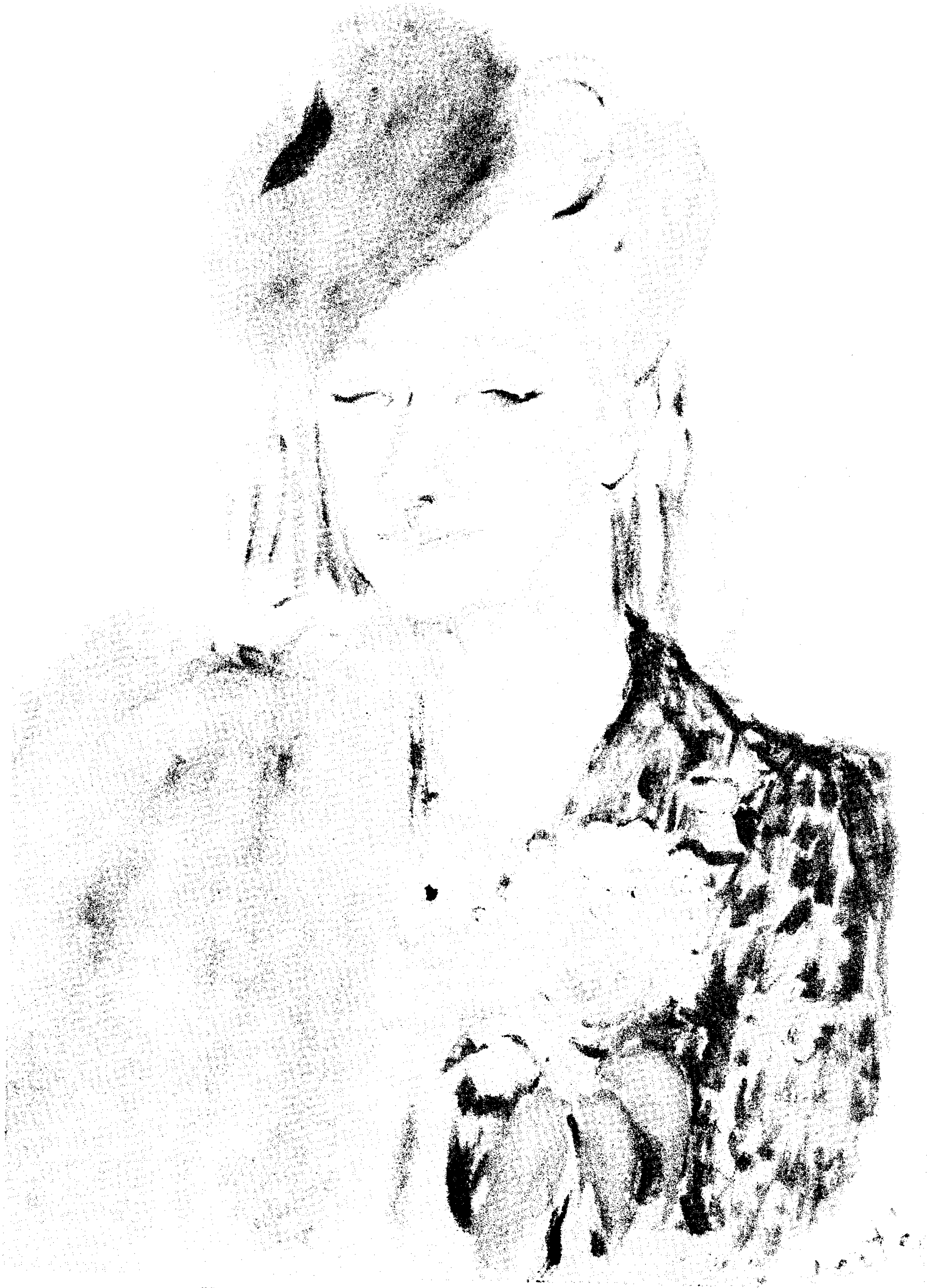
SO VERY HATTIE

Hattie Carnegie (1886-1956) never really broke new ground with the clothes that bore her formidable label, but it's appropriate that her thirty-year reign as the pioneering spirit of Seventh Avenue ready-to-wear is the subject of a splendid retrospective at the museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology ("Hattie Carnegie: American Style Defined," through April 27th). Not unlike Donna Karan, Carnegie was less a fashion innovator than a canny retailer who was intent on making clothes that reflected both the American woman's drive and her clean, scrubbed-face, open sensibility. Early in Carnegie's career, her shop became a favorite of women with ambition, among them Tallulah Bankhead and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst. While her contemporaries Christian Dior and Balenciaga were exploring artifice and flair for the international woman of mystery, a Carnegie dress or suit was meant to be unobtrusive, in order not to deflect from the personality of the wearer—or from her accomplishments. Accordingly, Carnegie's palette was limited. Many of her suits for day were in gray or brown; the occasional decorative ermine tail aside, her most arresting evening dresses were black. In the forties and early fifties, as American women became more of a force in the workplace, they began buying Carnegie's uniforms-for-use in ever greater numbers, and completing their ensembles with Carnegie hats and gloves and bags and perfumes, in order to be efficient and feminine, streamlined for productivity.

As has been true of many other fashion personalities, Carnegie's greatest invention may have been herself. She was born in Vienna, as Henrietta Kanengeiser, and emigrated to New York with her family in 1892. At the age of eighteen, she began working as a messenger at Macy's. By the time she opened her first shop, five years later, the ferociously ambitious woman from the Lower East Side had changed her surname to the very grand Carnegie—after Andrew, who was then the richest man in America.

—Hilton Als

COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM AT F.I.T.



Hattie Carnegie, the pioneering spirit of Seventh Avenue ready-to-wear.

der Soviet power, social guarantees existed, even if they were at a modest level. All this makes it possible for the pro-Communists to make a return. It all came from the shock therapy and the collapse of the union. The Army has suffered. People cannot afford to go visit their relatives. This is what people hold this new team accountable for. And so the Communists and the Communist radicals collect the dividends."

It seemed curious to me that Gorbachev could be so calm about the return of the Communists. These, after all, were not the liberal Communists of his time but, rather, those who were left behind, those who supported the August coup of 1991. They are calling not merely for Yeltsin's head but for his.

"It's true," Gorbachev allowed. "They treat me as a traitor." And yet he was so calm about it that I felt he did not know how true it was.

IV-THE VILLAGE

THE morning after I saw Gorbachev, I flew south to Stavropol, the city in southern Russia where he had reigned as regional leader before coming to Moscow, late in the Brezhnev era. At the Stavropol airport, I found a driver willing to make a two-hour drive through a nasty windstorm to Gorbachev's old village, Privolnoye.

In 1989, when I first took the trip, local K.G.B. authorities made sure I never got close to the village. First, I was told at a hotel in Stavropol that Privolnoye was afflicted with an undetermined cattle-related virus and that the village was under strict quarantine. When I tried to go anyway, I managed only a glimpse of Privolnoye before it became clear that the K.G.B. presence there was roughly what it was on the Chinese border. Now no one much cared.

"Why do you want to go to Privolnoye?" the driver asked as we journeyed farther into a kind of snow-fog. "Why don't you visit my village? It's considered the biggest village in the world!"

"It is? How can— "

"It's in all the books. Biggest village in the world."

"Well, I wanted to see Gorbachev's old village, talk to people, see how their lives had changed since I was here last."

"Oh," he said. "Well, don't expect perestroika."

He wasn't kidding. The villages in the region have no natural reason for failure. The soil is rich, the weather far milder than that of the Russian north. In the Russian Far East, in Siberia, in the north, I had been in villages of stunning poverty: the wooden huts seemed almost to sink into the muck; the diet was strictly kasha and bread; the men drank themselves to death; the old went without all but the most rudimentary medical care. Privolnoye looks better than the average village: the houses are made of brick and concrete, and are in good repair. And yet Privolnoye turns out to suffer the symptoms of countless ills of post-Communism.

I met a seventy-year-old woman named Maria Kaiko, whose family had lived in Privolnoye for generations—"More generations than I know," she said—and she remembered Gorbachev well. She had worked as an accountant in the peasants' brigade with his father. She invited me into her hut, and as we sat around her tiny table she voiced the central memory of all Russians of her—and Gorbachev's—generation.

"The Germans were here—they came August 2, 1942, and they left February 23, 1943, when they were kicked out," she said. "I worked in the village office. In those days, one thousand seven hundred men were sent to the front, and only half of them—maybe fewer—came back. There is a monument to them in the local cemetery. We had an eternal flame to their memory, but now it's been turned off. To maintain it became impossible."

The region is not far from the war in Chechnya, and Privolnoye and the surrounding villages are now filled with refugees. The economy has collapsed. The local hospital can no longer afford to feed the patients. Under the new regime, the local collective farm—the kolkhoz—was free to turn itself into a "joint-stock company," but that has done nothing but sour everyone on capitalism. Without subsidies from Moscow, the farm has fallen into a dismal state. Besides, no one wants to buy its products—wheat, sunflowers, corn, cattle, sheep. The farmers can hardly afford to repair their equipment or buy the supplies they need. There is not enough fuel, so it is impossible to sow in time. Crops rot in the fields. There is not enough fodder for the cattle. Pensioners are still living decently on around a hundred dollars a month for a couple, but the young and the middle-aged, who are dependent on the new world, the new rules of economic life, are suffering. People get by, they admit, by stealing food, gasoline, fodder, and equipment from the farm. In the last days of Gorbachev, a new man, full of beans, named Ivan Mikhailenko, came from Stavropol to reform the collective farm. Soon he was accused of building houses for himself, piling up a fortune. There were even more absurd rumors, that he had a private plane, a helicop-

"People who watched 'Donahue'—next on 'Geraldo'!"

ter. After a while, the local people threw him out and brought in another man, Nikolai Brizhalkin, a former Party official from the area. The farm only got worse and now the people want the first one back.

Even someone as old and relatively secure as Maria Kaiko can no longer find it in her heart to remember Mikhail Gorbachev with much fondness. She is happy to be able to read an uncensored newspaper and watch soap operas on television. And yet she yearns for the past, not because she is a nostalgic Stalinist but because she fears for the future of her children and her grandchildren.

"It's a pity there is no more Soviet Union. We had more right then, I think," she said. "We don't need capitalists. Millionaires have two-story houses and two cars. They don't keep their money in a stocking. And how they make this money, God knows. This is what the majority of people here think. Only those who are close to money or really have a lot of it think otherwise."

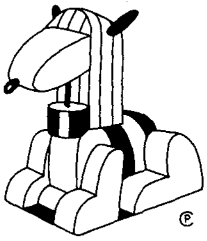
Did she believe that Gorbachev was at fault?

"I wouldn't say that Gorbachev is to blame," she said. "He just got lost and fell under some sort of power. But I was really ashamed of him when the union collapsed. He just walked away from the struggle, like a mother who leaves her husband and children behind."

Maria's husband, Dmitri, came in, and said, "Mikhail Sergeyevich did not do the right thing. We have hard feelings about him now. We won the Great Patriotic War and then along came these people and now who are we? We are nothing. Gorbachev was one of us, and then he went and did this."

One of the first signs of capitalism in the big cities like Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Nizhni Novgorod was the kiosk: street-side booths, some of them no bigger than a freezer, where people sold whatever goods they could get—liquor, candy, stockings, children's clothing. In Privolnoye, there are three kiosks. The one private store, a television-and-refrigerator-repair shop, closed down a few months after it opened, because the owner couldn't pay his taxes. A young man named Aleksandr Gordubei, who helps to run one of the kiosks, sold me a German chocolate bar and told me that while he thought "Mikhail Sergeyevich did more for the world than he did for the country," he was glad for the chance to make a living on his own.

A woman in her twenties, Galina Tarasovich, runs the one enterprise in town that offers something resembling a good time. After the local grocery store closes down for the day, she opens it up as a bar. Her husband is one of those farmers in town who make almost nothing in salary—four dollars a month. The bar is the couple's one chance to make a little cash. She is barely breaking even, mainly because hardly anyone in town has the money to treat himself or herself to a night out.



When I asked Tarasovich why she didn't move to Stavropol, or some other city nearby, she stared at me with a look of infinite pity.

"Where else is he supposed to work?" she said. "Where else is he supposed to go? I might think about leaving for Stavropol, but then where would we live? At least here we have a few ducks, some chickens."

It was all very depressing. I thought if there was one man in this mournful village willing and eager to say a nice word for Gorbachev it would be Aleksandr Yakovenko, a pensioner who had known Gorbachev for more than fifty years. Yakovenko had worked with Gorbachev in the fields and had known his entire family. When, in the late eighties, the K.G.B. did allow a few journalists to visit Privolnoye, they invariably set them up to see Yakovenko. The surveillance is long gone, and not many journalists come around anymore. As he led me into the living room, Yakovenko laughed and said, "Before they sent Hedrick Smith to see me, the K.G.B. called and said that the foreigners don't like to take off their shoes in the house and that we had to serve them something to eat!"

Yakovenko is retired, but he still tends a small private plot, and he stays abreast of the gossip in town. He did nothing to hide his disappointment.

"Before the collapse of the union, everything was more or less all right," he said. "But after that there was dramatic change. They freed prices, and suddenly the twenty thousand rubles my wife and I had saved—we thought we could retire on it, even help our children with it—all of it was worth no more than a taxi ride. The government says it might compensate us for that, but will it really? I doubt it. You see, we were raised on Communist ideology. We were used to it. For us it provided discipline, it meant education, it meant free medical care and a guaranteed retirement. It meant that even we provincial people could travel a little or go on vacation to rest houses. Now no one can afford to travel. So, of course, we have nostalgia for the old days.

"Of course, we're not stupid. We know better than you that there were repressions. In 1937 and 1938, people were beaten and tortured. There were enemies of the people, Stalin said, but I don't think there were real enemies of the people—at least, not here in Privolnoye. We don't miss that sort of thing. The fifties and the sixties were hard, but the period of Brezhnev until the collapse of the union—I would say that was the peak of the good old days. Under Brezhnev we could buy a car. Houses were built. This lasted through Andropov and Chernenko, even Gorbachev. Then it became impossible."

Yakovenko was reluctant to criticize Gorbachev or Yeltsin. In fact, at one point he said, "Are you sure it's O.K. for you to be here? The, uh, people in Moscow—they don't mind?" But it was clear that, while his own house was a fine one and his pension was enough to live on, Yakovenko was no different from everyone else in Privolnoye. He feared for the future, and he was more than a little ashamed that the greatest son of the village had done so much to unleash this new and uncertain wave of history.

"Lots of people in town are hurt by Gorbachev because they feel he is responsible for us living so badly now," he said. "The big-time mafia hasn't come to this village yet, but they will."

As I was leaving, Yakovenko pointed toward a cemetery not far off. Gorbachev's parents were buried there. It is quite possible that Gorbachev will meet a similarly modest end. In another time, a place would have been held for him against the walls of the Kremlin. That is no longer likely. And Yakovenko, his great friend from childhood, his great supporter for so long, said he had decided which way Russia needed to go now. "I'm voting for the Communists," he said. "We need the Party again." ◆

OSCAR PORTFOLIO

TURNING ON THE LIGHT

What makes this year's Academy Awards different isn't just the absence of some famous names and big-budget pictures, but the likelihood that Oscars will be handed out to actors and pictures notable for their intelligence.

PEOPLE who catch their movies straight—which is to say in theatres, not screening rooms—have immune systems that a laboratory rat would envy. Filtering out the megadecibel, hundred-and-twenty-shot trailer for next week's looming disaster—by the looks of it, a guaranteed successor to "Waterworld" or "Cutthroat Island" or "The Scarlet Letter"—we exchange groans and headshakes in the dark, and hang on for the feature, half wavering in our conviction that the movies (well, maybe not *this* one) may reward us in the end, not just with seven bucks' worth of entertainment but with flashes and scenes and performances, and now and then a bit of art, that we wouldn't have missed for anything. Hollywood's capacity for extravagant dumbness feels like a national embarrassment, up there with the condition of our schools and our politics, but sometimes when Oscar time rolls around again and we run down the list of nominations we can take heart a little before we begin to dope the odds.

Pig-smarts are well established, and maybe it was the presence of the charming Australian-made porcinema "Babe" in the best-picture category this year that first made me notice that intelligence—yes, yes!—might be what lifts and lights this year's lists. The prime footage in the multi-nominated Italian import "Il Postino" comes when its rustic letter carrier, played by the late Massimo Troisi, learns that he is capable of metaphor. The self-doubt and weariness of Susan Sarandon and the sneering, angrily crumbling defiance of Sean Penn transform "Dead Man Walking" into a succession of thoughtful and nearly unbearable difficulties—a story, instead of a tract, about capital punishment. Emma Thompson wrote a light, unawed script from Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility," and plays Elinor Dashwood in the movie: who else can she be but sense? The cool Ed Harris, in Ron Howard's "Apollo 13," keeps his head while all at NASA are losing theirs. Brains everywhere. On these pages as well, Helmut Newton's photographs of other 1995 nominees establish an intimacy between the camera eye and the returned gaze of some fully consenting adults.

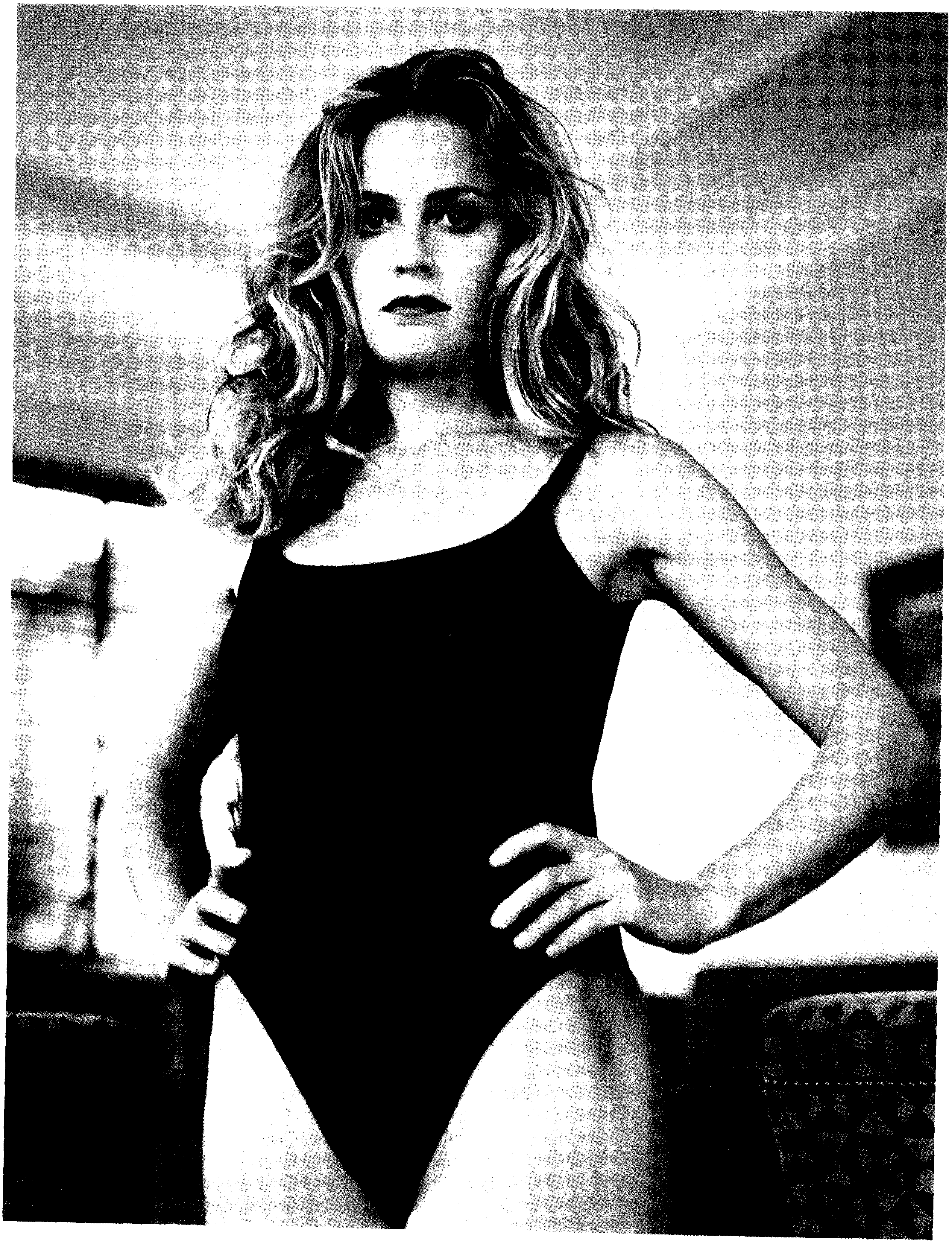
ASSUREDLY beautiful, remote from us behind that classic chin and hard stare, Elisabeth Shue stands at the brink of the absolute familiarity that movie stardom exacts. Selected in the best-actress category for her performance in "Leaving Las Vegas," the low-budget sleeper that also won nominations for Nicolas Cage and for director and adapted-screenplay writer Mike Figgis, Shue has been the subject of ardent conversations among audiences who saw the movie and can't forget the pained and private stranger at its center. After a decade in the business ("Soapdish," "The Karate Kid," "Cocktail") and also Off Broadway, she was still perhaps best known for being the sister of Andrew Shue, who plays the saccharine Billy on "Melrose Place." That and—well, for being a *person*. She was in her early thirties, and was married; she had been to Harvard; and there was a tragedy of some sort in her past. (She was with her oldest brother, Will, a medical resident, when he was killed in a grotesque swimming accident.) Now, inextricably, she has become the worn-down Vegas hooker Sera.

Shue gets our attention in the film when she invites Nicolas Cage, the resolutely alcoholic Ben, to come and live with her, because the moment is stripped of innuendo. Sera is wary as well as tough and sexual, but she makes it plain that she is offering him a way to come home. He accepts on the condition that she will never, ever, ask him to stop drinking. Later on, poolside in a little desert resort they're visiting, she sits astride him and, taking the bottle of tequila from him, begins to drink it down, the way he does. Then she tips the stuff onto her face and body and leans over him, soaked in alcohol: an intimate, available presence, she is a drunkard's dream come true. The scene runs scarily along the precipices of bathos and disbelief; credit for its nerve and style belongs to Mike Figgis, but Shue has won our trust, and we don't laugh or pull back.

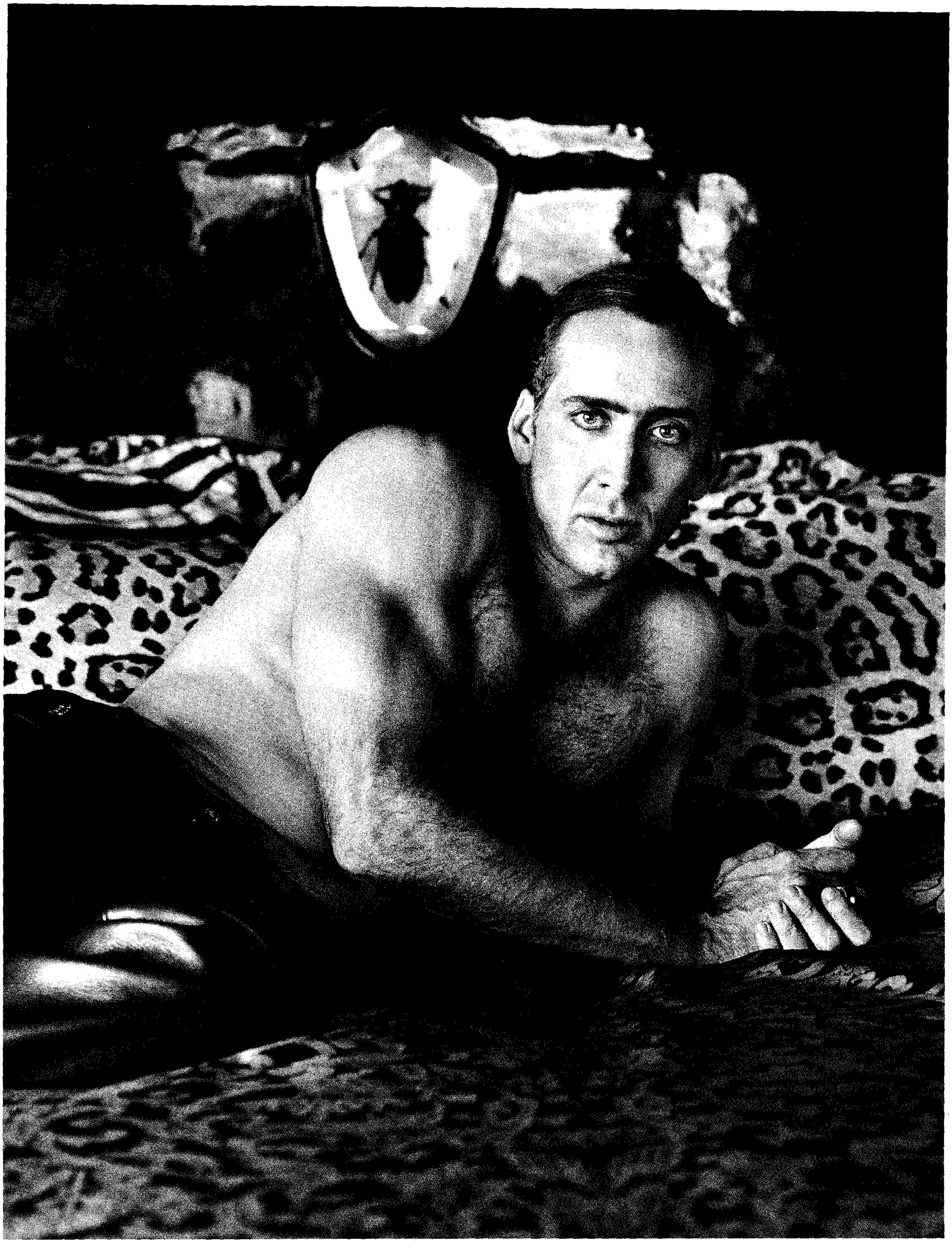
The heart-of-gold prostitute is a Hollywood standby—Claire Trevor and Jane Fonda and Jodie Foster have offered their definitions, and Sharon Stone and Mira Sorvino did their own Oscar-nominated turns down the block this past year—and if we readily accept that Shue's Sera is both hard and vulnerable, it is because she is something more, which is sad. Throughout "Leaving Las Vegas," the camera stays on the resourceful and brilliant Cage, whose Ben is rushing to kill himself with booze, just as he has promised, but it is Sera who confirms for us that this is really happening. She is a grownup, which is to say that she seems capable of more than one idea or reaction at a time. Sera is prepared to help Ben die because she has considered death; she is prepared to mourn for him because she is already in mourning for herself. All these emotions come into play on Shue's face—with its broad forehead and anxious, poignant frown—often following or overtaking each other in a rush of feelings. Sera finds something almost lighthearted in the lovers' situation, which would not have occurred to us, and the movie becomes romantic in a way that does away with its own strangeness. If we are left troubled as well as moved by a performance from an actress we hadn't noticed before, it's a reminder that even a glimpsed experience of life and grief, up there on the silver screen, can still take us by surprise.

—ROGER ANGELL

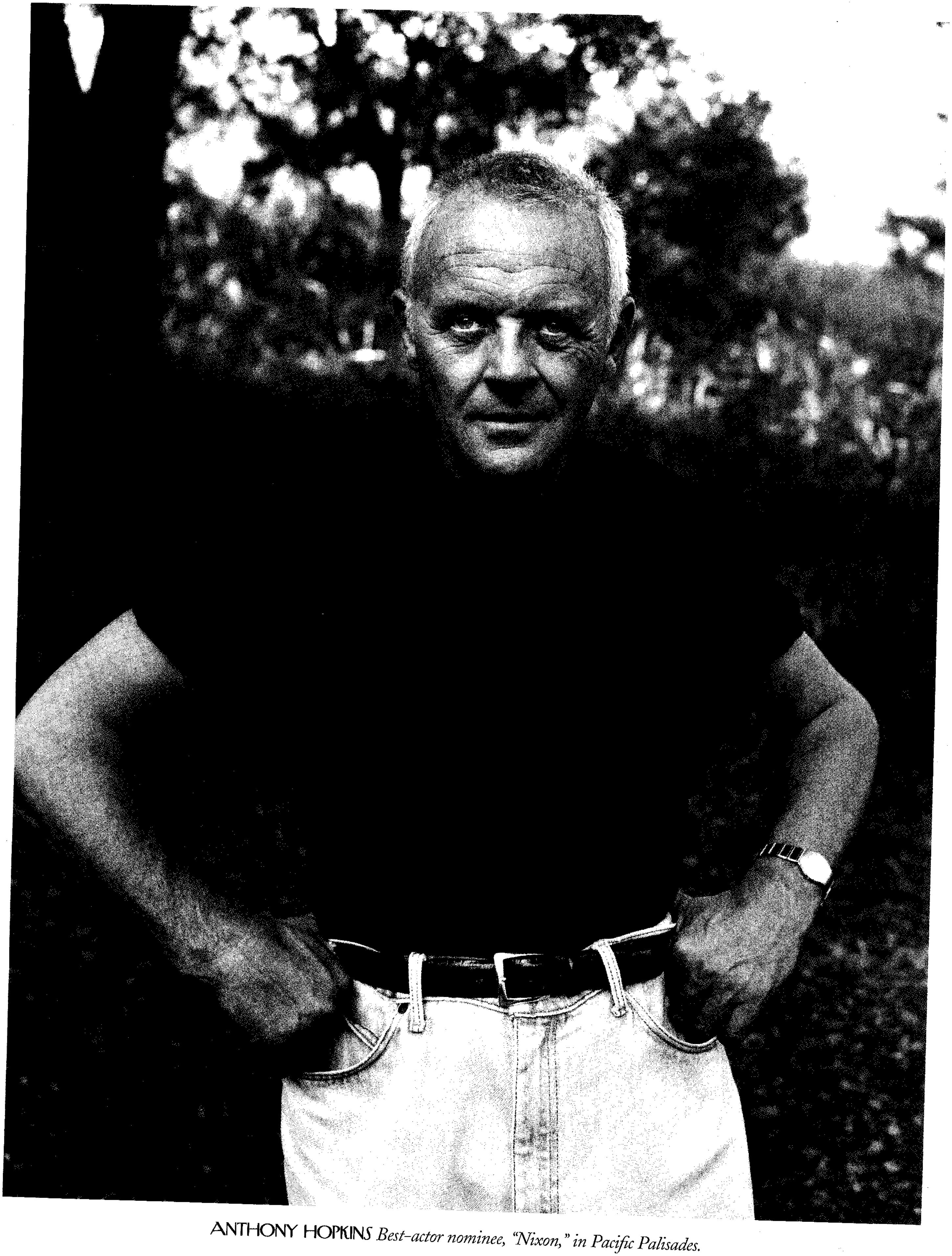
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HELMUT NEWTON



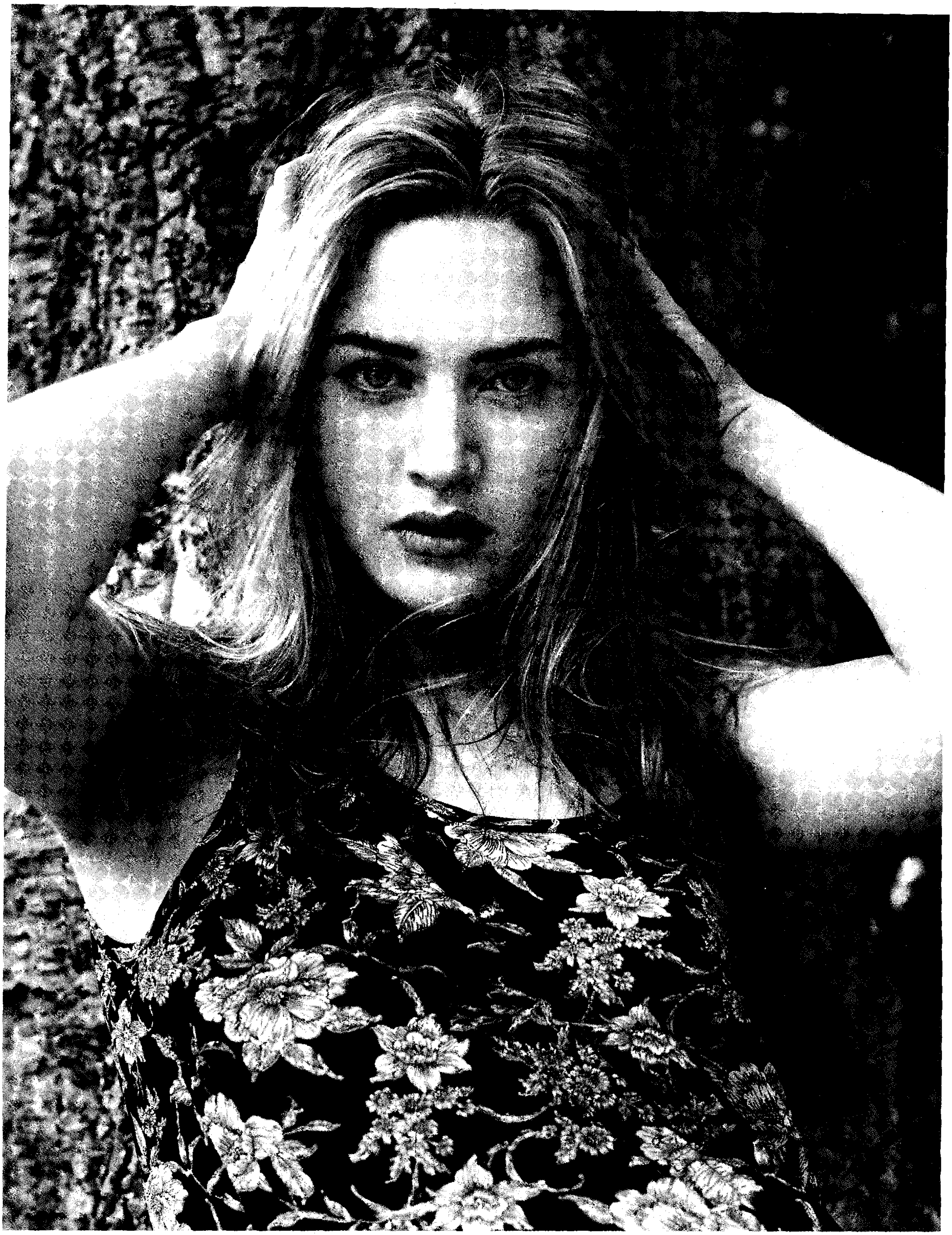
ELISABETH SHUE *Best-actress nominee, "Leaving Las Vegas," at the Chateau Marmont.*



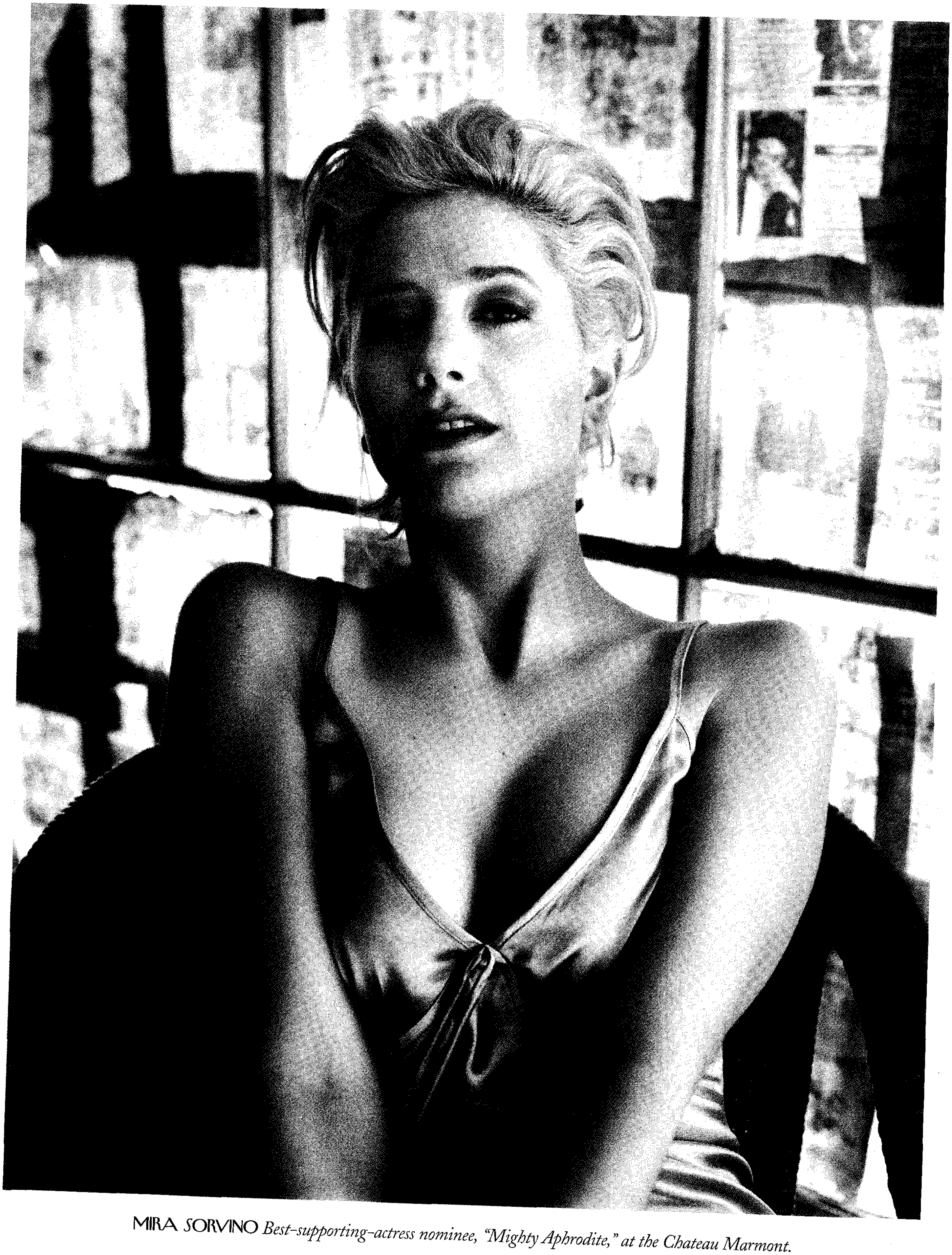
NICOLAS CAGE *Best-actor nominee, "Leaving Las Vegas," at his Hollywood home.*



ANTHONY HOPKINS *Best-actor nominee, "Nixon," in Pacific Palisades.*



KATE WINSLET *Best-supporting-actress nominee, "Sense and Sensibility," in Bel-Air.*

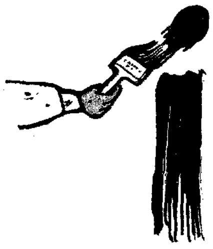


MIRA SORVINO *Best-supporting-actress nominee, "Mighty Aphrodite," at the Chateau Marmont.*

FICTION

WONDERFUL TRICKS

BY GREGORY SPATZ



I DATED a woman once whose twin sister was a fool. At night I'd go to their house. I'd sit on the porch, and the sister who took care of the one who couldn't speak or tie her shoes would bring out food—potatoes mainly, stuffed with tuna fish or sour cream and bacon bits, sometimes sticks of celery with salted peanut butter or baba ghanouj wedged in the crevices. I drank a beer and ate the food on a porch swing, watching the women come and go. They were medium height and had sharp, Irish features—long eyelashes and red-brown, shoulder-length hair. They were pretty. One eye opened slightly wider than the other, giving you the impression that they were amused or skeptical, even when they weren't, and they used a kind of cream on their skin that I loved. The cream had a smell that made you think you'd never been alone in your life and never would be alone again.

The sister I dated was Marie. The one who couldn't talk or tie her shoes was Sarah. I had a thing about their feet. They were the prettiest feet I'd ever seen. Marie's toes had knuckles on them, like fingers, not one digit bent out of shape or squashed into its mate, and the nails were all clean and evenly cut, creamy, like the skin of some cactus fruit. She wouldn't admit her feet were nice, though secretly, I think, she knew. She never slept until she'd washed them in the sink by her bed, dried them, and put on a pair of clean, colorful socks. Every night I'd hear the taps go on and the water splashing and then I'd lift my head a little to see her there in the dim light, her eyes half lowered, her leg up in the sink basin and a towel over one shoulder, scrubbing. "Stanley. Wake up now," she'd say when she was done. "Time for you to go."

I met them making a bid to paint the outside of their house—a scabby-red Victorian with porches front and back, in the oldest part of town. Right away I saw how much work it was going to be. There were loose boards all over, rotten boards, exposed wiring, and the ceiling of one of the porches was split and sagging into the middle, leaking hundred-year-old dirt and cobwebs onto the floor. That would have to be repaired before anyone went at it with a paintbrush.

I pointed out everything I saw. "Scaly," I said, touching the porch railing. Marie nodded her head and listened indifferently, as if she knew all this already. A pack of Camels in her front shirt pocket pulled her shirt down. The skin between her breasts looked broken out, and she had on a bra with lacy trim. I tried not to notice this or the rips in her jeans, two torn crescents just under the rear pockets, which winked open and shut as she walked ahead of me.

That day Sarah was seated at a big table in the living room, construction paper spilled around her in little pieces, and paintbrushes in plastic cups and coffee cans. Her eyes were as blank as a blind person's, and she was caressing one hand with the other, staring at something on the wall.

"Measles with encephalitis, when we were thirteen," Marie told me. "She's all right, she just can't take care of herself. I'm mom and nurse and big sister rolled into one. Like I don't get enough of taking care of people!" She went on to explain that she was a nurse, on call every weekend for a home-care-hospice agency downtown. I tried to picture Sarah's face covered with measle scars. But there were none: she was Marie precisely, down to the spiky eyelashes and the shine on her skin.

"Home-care hospice," I said. "What's that?"

"It's for people who are dying. We take care of them so they can die in their own homes, peacefully."

"Sounds stressful." My last girlfriend had been a nurse, too. She always talked about how hard the work was—coming home at six in the morning and dreaming all afternoon about people barking at her and urinating on the floor. It was sort of what broke us up: that I wasn't willing to move in together after a year of dating, and she was tired of trying to juggle me with her schedule.

Marie frowned like she thought I was being deliberately dumb. "It's about the easiest job I've ever had. We're not trying to save anyone's life."

My bid came in the highest. But I had purposely bid high, since her house was such a headache and I didn't think it would be worth my trouble unless it paid well.

"I'm really sorry," she told me on the phone, a week or two later.

"Nothing to be sorry for," I said. "Happens all the time."

I heard her suck on her cigarette. "But you must have been wondering."

"All part of the game," I said. I asked her who she'd ended up hiring, and she mentioned a couple of Vietnam vets I knew from having been underbid by them before. "Very good, very good," I said. "You be sure and call again sometime if you want something painted."

I figured it was the last I'd ever hear from her, but a month later she called. "I've changed my mind again on the color for the front and back doors and those men say they can't do it. They have another job." She inhaled furiously and blew out into the phone. "Truth is, I think they can't be bothered."

"Could be," I said.

"So, what do you charge for something like that?"

I told her I'd have to come out and have another look.

That time it was just before dark, and she was dressed more like a regular person, in shorts and a denim work shirt. No half-revealed parts of her body to avoid looking at. Her legs were stringy, muscular-seeming, and I could see the veins in her shins. I imagined those veins saturated with cigarette smoke, nicotine breaking her blood cells and making the blood thicker or thinner, I didn't know which.

I was about to start a job for an

FILIP PAGOWSKI

apartment complex on the other side of town, and doing her doors in my spare time would be no problem at all. "I'll stop by in the morning, throw on some primer, touch up those hinges. Then on my way home I can stop off—do your first coat of enamel. Shouldn't take but a couple of nights. Two coats, maybe three." While I was talking she unbuttoned the lower buttons on her shirt, slid in one hand, and began doing something—rubbing and pinching herself, I think—staring distractedly over my shoulder. I couldn't concentrate anymore. I was conscious of my heart punching erratically. I heard my voice drone on. "Shouldn't be too much of a headache. I'll stay out of your way."

"Let me ask you something," she said. "You look like a sensitive man." She blinked and smiled hard, as if we had agreed on something funny. "The type to take another person's needs"—she paused seriously—"as significant."

That's when she spelled out everything she had in mind for me. It wasn't like anything I'd ever heard before, and for some time I didn't know what to make of it. Never in my life had anyone come on to me like this. A woman, I was thinking. A woman!

AFTER we'd eaten, Marie would take Sarah inside to help her bathe, comb her hair, and get settled in bed. Some nights it took longer than others. I'd sit on the porch swing with my feet on the railing and rock, wondering if tonight was the night Marie would finally let me make love to her. I hadn't had any sex in a year—since my last girlfriend, the nurse—and I was at the point where I practically couldn't imagine it anymore. Across the street were two houses just like the one the sisters lived in—skinny, square Victorians with crooked window trim and sagging porches. I'd see the people in the house on the left, an older couple, sitting on their couch watching television.

Eventually, Marie slipped out onto the porch and sat next to me, her hands smelling like soap and that lotion. "Sorry," she said. I'd been here almost every night for a week, but it felt longer than that. "Sarah wouldn't let me leave her alone. She wants to know what you're doing here." Though Sarah couldn't speak, Marie insisted they often put questions and ideas into each other's heads. "I had to explain."

I laughed. "Good thing. At least one of us knows."

She punched me lightly in the arm. "You know," she said. "Don't pretend you don't." She fingered a cigarette from the pack in her pocket and lit up. "Mind?" she asked.

"Hell no," I said. I'd sat next to her enveloped in smoke so many nights in a row I was beginning to feel like a smoker myself.

"What can I say that will put your mind at ease?"

"Nothing. I'm at ease."

That first night—the night Marie spelled everything out for me—I didn't quite believe her. Soon enough, I figured, she'd want me to make love to her. "I'm a married woman," she'd said. "For the second time. And I plan on staying that way." We were inside on the couch. She sat with her legs apart, leaning forward, her elbows on her knees as if she were about to jump up. She had on white canvas Keds with pointed toes, like slippers.

"You and a lot of other people," I said. This seemed to put her off. "Where's the husband?"

"I'll tell you if you really want to know."

"Why ask if I didn't?"

She appeared to think about this. "He's a few thousand miles away, for one thing—doing what he does best. It's a long story, but basically it evolves to not being able to live together under the same roof. Happily." She pinched her nose. "With my sister included."

I scratched some paint from my left forefinger. "What does he do?"

"Doctor."

"And does he know about me?" I asked.

She shook her head. "That comes later, if at all. My offer stands. You can stay if you want, but we only touch nonsexually, and you don't sleep here. That would be too . . . too much for now."

I'd always thought of people who could talk this mechanically about sex as uncaring or, at least, having no real sexual reflexes. Now I saw it wasn't a matter of caring or reflex at all; it was something else—it was like posing in front of the mirror and trying to decide which way to smile. I'd had only four other girlfriends in my life—twenty-eight years—and I felt a little out of my depth. "What's nonsexual?" I asked.

She sighed, pulled her hair back on one side. Her skin was a little shiny and greasy, glinting in the light. "I know what I want and need. Obviously, it's more than a clinical massage, or I'd go get one." She shook her head. "I want to touch and be touched." Her eyes flicked over mine and back down. "If there's an erotic content that becomes too much, then I think we'll both be aware. I trust that instinct." She paused. "And I'm willing to experiment, too, in a certain way, finding the boundaries we're both comfortable with."

"Boundaries!" I said. "You really are married, aren't you?"

She nodded. "And not looking to get divorced again, either. You have to understand."

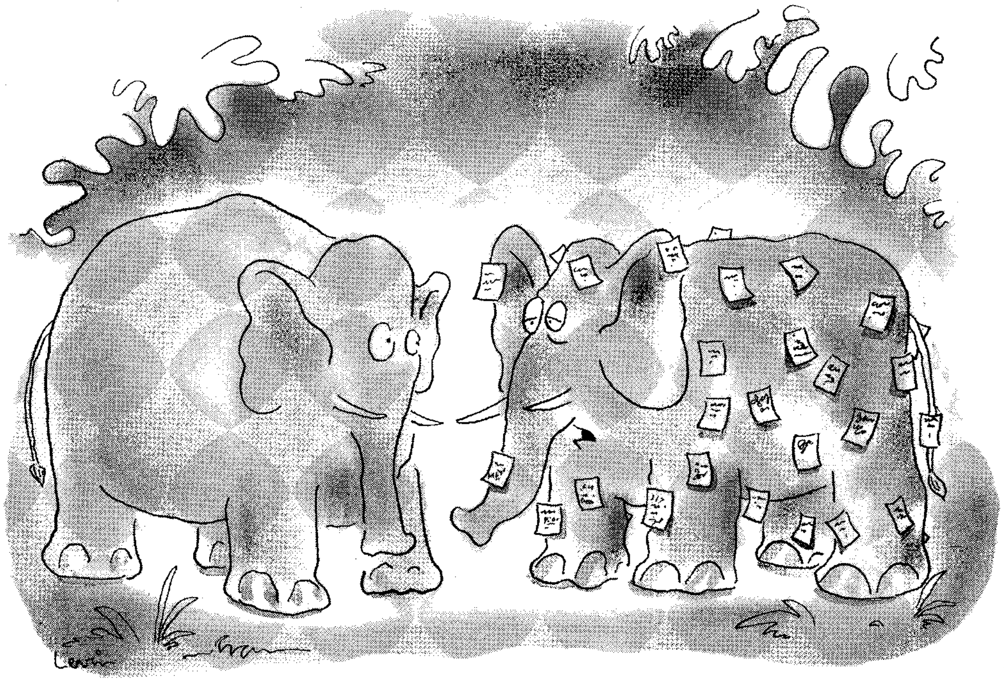
We were sitting close enough that our knees almost touched. She wasn't wearing a wedding band. I picked up her hand, and held her fingers to my mouth. "You smell so good," I said. "What is that smell? It's like fruit or flowers or something." I put my nose and mustache in her palm, sniffing.

She laughed. "It tickles," she said. "Come on." And she got up, pulling me after her, upstairs to her bedroom. While she was in the bathroom I undressed to my boxers and lay down on her bed, anticipating the feel of her hands on my skin. I stretched, ran my hands over my bare ribs, rolled onto my stomach, and tried to stop myself from shaking.

"Mmm," she said, once she'd begun rubbing my neck and back. "What a treat." I saw weird paisleys and sparkle patterns on the insides of my eyelids. "I thought your skin would be nice, but I had no idea it would be like this." She leaned forward and swept her forearms back and forth over my shoulder blades like wipers. "Human beings can't live without touch. It's a proven fact. You shouldn't think this is unmeaningful." Later, watching her wash her feet at the sink, I felt deceived. I could have been anyone at all.

"Stanley, wake up," she said. "Time for you to go."

ONE night we were on the porch later than usual, talking, Sarah on the floor next to us, lying on her side, playing finger games with herself. Marie had her feet on the railing and was rocking us back and forth in the porch swing. It was a perfect night. All day it



"As I get older, I find I rely more and more on these sticky notes to remind me."

had rained. The night before there had been storms and wind; now the rain had blown off, leaving the sky clean and the air sweet. I was rested, for once, not having worked that day, and a little drunk. Marie was giving me her theory of relationships. This was something she'd told me a few times already—often enough so that I didn't really believe her. She said, "It's the person who sees how it's going to end who leaves. Don't you think?"

I told her I had no idea.

"Get dumped a few hundred times and you'll see," she said. She laughed. "I'll have to tell you all about it someday." The way she said this I knew I'd never hear another word on the subject. For a while we didn't say anything, just swung and hung still, with Sarah humming next to us, slapping her palm on the floor unrhythmically. I wondered what things would be like if Sarah were not retarded—how I'd choose between the two women or even tell them apart, or if I'd have a choice at all. I put my feet on the railing, too, one on either side of Marie's, so we looked like a person with four legs, and both of us started talking at the same time. She said, "Time to put Sarah to bed." Then, quickly, as if she were embarrassed for saying it: "Today I bought this new incense I want us to try—it's supposed to be relaxing or something, good for massage. See, I do think of you once in a while when we're not together."

I BEGAN having the weird sensation of distances disappearing. Some nights at their house I'd look out the rear window in Marie's bedroom, see the plants and trees under the street light waving in the wind across the lot from us, and I'd feel I was touching them in my eyes—like they were inside my eyes the same way a reflection sometimes sits in the bottom of a spoon. Cars passing on the street next to the front porch went into my senses and stayed there. A muffler's noise tingled in my right elbow.

"You just aren't sleeping enough," she said. I'd been trying to explain it to her. "You're wiped out and your mind's playing tricks."

"Yeah," I said. "Wonderful tricks." I was on my back, Marie sitting up straddling my right ankle, working my left knee and thigh with both hands. She was in a T-shirt and her underwear. The pressure of her crotch on top of my foot was almost too much, increasing and decreasing as she leaned forward and back into her hands. She was right, of course. I was exhausted. My throat stung all day and my eyes burned. Often, I couldn't feel the soles of my feet on the ladder, going up and down.

"You need a few nights off," she said. "Get some good solid nights of sleep alone." She continued rubbing my leg, fingers circling around and squeezing my thigh muscles. "I could use a few, myself." Every time she lifted my leg to get at the muscles underneath I felt a kind of slithering, from my groin to the top of my head. Then as my leg fell back against the bed and she moved around to the front muscles I'd feel myself tightening in the same places. I knew she'd go no higher than the hem of my shorts, over and under.

"Yeah," I said. It was some effort to keep this rational-seeming conversation going. "At least you can sleep in."

Again she lifted my leg and slid her fingers under, just inside the hem of my shorts, squeezing. She used her touch in ways I'd never thought people could, as if she knew just when to knead, press, or let her fingers slip over me. "Except for the fact Sarah wakes up—usually about seven. Six or seven."

"Please, Marie," I said. "If you touch me anymore like this I'm going to die."

"What," she said. "Like what?"

I would have rolled onto my side, but I couldn't, the way she was sitting on me, and there was nothing else to press myself into, so I took her by the shoulders and pulled her down. "I'm going to come," I whispered. "Sorry. I just can't hold it anymore. Sorry." Her hair smelled like that lotion. Her skin was slick with it. For a few seconds, I think, she was still trying to keep up our platonic pretense, her fingers slipping around like questions (here? here?), but once my mouth found her chin, soapy tasting, and then her mouth—an acid, nose-tingling taste from her cigarettes—she stopped. "Mmm," she said. "Oh no. No, not yet." But it was too late. The moment her tongue touched mine, I let go.

A while later she said, "I have two things I want to tell you." I couldn't judge how much time had passed. Her voice was dreamy, so maybe we'd fallen asleep, though I hadn't been aware of sleeping, only of staring into a corner of the ceiling where I knew some cobwebs were. I couldn't see them in the dark, but I imagined them sticking to my face, the same way her hair was caught between the whiskers on my cheeks.

"Yes." I waited for her to continue, moving my hands down from her shoulders to her hips, lifting her T-shirt to feel her bare waist and sliding down the elastic of her underwear. She was surprisingly soft around the hips considering how thin her legs were. My fingers sank deep into her. "Go on."

"Maybe three things."

"O.K."

"First, I'm really glad to have you touch me like this. If it's what you want. And I think it is. Second, and I think you know this, that old saying: Beware of the man who apologizes before there's anything to apologize for—you know he has something to hide." She paused. "What's with that?"

"With what?"

"Apologizing."

"I'm not apologizing."

"You are." She dug her fingers at my ribs. " 'Sorry' was the first thing you said. What are you trying to hide?"

"Nothing! I didn't know if this was what you wanted or not. Really!"

"Sure." She laughed. "This weekend I had two patients die, both men. They were exactly as skinny as you. One body I had to carry down four flights of stairs."

"So?"

"So, you should know better than to try and pull anything funny with me." She laughed again and stuck her tongue up my nostril.

"What the hell!" I jerked my head away from her.

"You don't like it?"

"It's disgusting!"

"You're young." She said nothing else, and for a few seconds I was afraid she'd ask me to leave now because I didn't feel precisely the same way about sex as she did. But then she sat up, lifted her shirt off over her head, and lay back on me.

"What was the third thing you were going to tell me?" I asked.

"That'll have to wait. Now I need you to touch me." Her tongue found mine again. "Everywhere," she said to my teeth. Her mouth was wide open, dripping saliva, like the insides of an orange.

I didn't make love to her. I couldn't. Twice I tried. She lay under me, hooked her feet on my hips, and tipped her chin at me, hands on my elbows squeezing like she wanted to keep me in mind of something. But the instant I touched her, or felt myself begin slipping in, I let go. "This is so weird," I said. "I have no control. It's never happened to me in my life."

ALL the next day I couldn't tell if I was asleep or awake. This had its advantages. When I was on a roll, I was O.K.—slapping paint along the side of one of those apartment-complex monstrosities, nothing in my way, no sweat dripping in my eyes, no bugs trying to drown themselves in my eyeballs or the sweat on my forehead, no sun directly in my face. Then I was fine. In fact, I felt more connected in a mystical way to walls and boards and the way my paint went over them. But as soon as I got stuck on something—which was often, nearly every five minutes—I felt like my head would crack. My legs suddenly broke out in a sweat, and I wanted to bawl, "I can't do it anymore!" Of course I kept going.

What Marie didn't tell me that night we never made love had to do with Sarah. She told me the next morning—the only morning I woke up in her bed.

"She's possessive," I said, the moment she began explaining. It was early, five-thirty, my wake-up call. Outside it looked chilly and wet. In ten minutes I needed to be in my truck, heading across town. "That's it, isn't it? She'll kill me if I keep coming to see you?"

Marie laughed. "If only," she said. "That would keep me out of trouble, wouldn't it."

"You call this trouble?"

She nodded. "With a capital 'T.' "

"O.K. So what about Sarah."

She lay back, pulled the sheets up to her chin, and lifted her knees so the bed became a tent. "Actually, just the opposite. She's going to start having feelings for you. We're weird that way. Don't ask why. It just happens. And she doesn't have all my defenses." She was silent a second, staring at the wall behind me.

"Ah," I said, trying to move my face into her line of sight. "You mean . . . " But she was still staring at the wall, and I couldn't tell if she was listening. "Marie," I said. "You mean she might jump me? Is that what happened to the husbands?"

This made her laugh. She opened her arms, let her legs fall flat on the bed

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again, and said, "Silly. Come here." Then a few seconds later, "I haven't seen you with no clothes. In the light, I mean. Stand up so I can see." She pushed me off her. "Stand up!"

I got up, lifted my hands over my head, and turned a few circles, wiggling my fingers and sashaying my hips, then flexed one arm and looked menacingly at her over my biceps.

"Oh, baby! Better than I thought," she said.

I tried a more complicated pose standing on one leg with my arms raised and hopped around a few seconds, then sat next to her again on the bed. I wanted to say it was her turn now, but I didn't. Instead I said it was time to hit the road.

"Tonight again?" she asked. "Seven or eight?"

"You bet."

"Soon we'll have to take a few nights off."

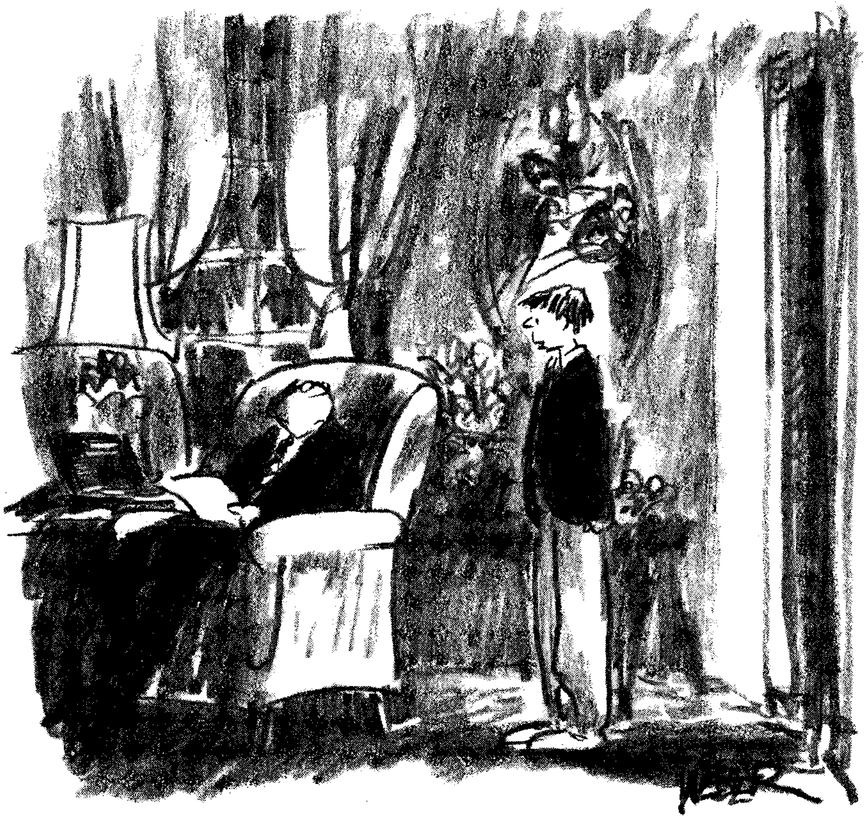
"Whatever." I swallowed. "Who needs sleep?"

She nodded. "There's more I have to tell you."

"Of course." I pulled my shirt on over my head.

But when I got to their house that night no lights were on inside or out. I circled around and around, tapping on windows and yelling hello through screens, but no one answered. I went back around to the front of the house, tried the door again for no reason, and sat on the porch swing. I wanted a beer. My lips felt dry. They were supposed to be here—Marie bringing out her microwaved potatoes on a tray with dishes of things to stuff in them, Sarah tagging behind. As long as they were moving, it was hard to see any difference between them. If Marie had her hair in a twist, so did Sarah, as if there were an invisible equals sign in the air between them, though, of course, as soon as you looked more closely, especially if Sarah was nervous, or "stimming," as Marie called it—twiddling her fingers and rocking—you could see all the differences.

I thought I'd fall asleep on the swing, but I didn't. When the couple across the street got up off their couch, flicked out the lights, and disappeared, something flicked off in me as well. I realized how late it was and that the sisters weren't coming home. Then I had my first waves of real anxiety. I'd been betrayed. I tried to remember if Marie had given any signal to make me expect it. "Seven or eight," she'd said, and here I was. I remembered her foot sticking out from under the sheets as I left—she'd never



"Dad, I've been thinking it might make things better between us if I just called you Ed."

washed or put on socks that night. They were the prettiest feet I'd ever seen, so arched and bony they looked carved.

MORE than a week I stayed away. I figured if she wanted to see me she'd call. It was up to her. She'd understand why, after one night of standing me up, I wasn't coming around on my own. I could take a hint. I've been alone most of my life. I'm not the type to make a show of my suffering. But I stewed. I talked to her in my head all the time. I was cursing her out, up and down the ladder, asking her what she thought I was, or if this was the way she treated all the men she knew. One day I spent an hour painting primer over a wall that had just been primed. "Stan!" my partner yelled. "I see!" I yelled back. "I'm not blind. You missed some spots, that's all." If he knew I was lying he never said so. On my lunch every day I called home to check for messages. Nothing. Every day after work I prayed for one of those flashing red blips in the half dark of my living room to be her—some explanation or apology from her. But no.

I don't like thinking about how things actually ended up, the day I finally went there and caught her out back pulling weeds from her tomato patch. "Hey, Stanley," she said, like we were old pals. "What a surprise." She smiled up at me. She had on shorts, a T-shirt, and gardening gloves, and there was a smear of red dirt across her forehead. The tomatoes were coming in—big, heavy red ones, like the plants had ruptured with fruit.

"Yes," I said. "One surprise deserves another, doesn't it?"

"Oh Stan, are you going to get all bent out of shape on me about this?" She looked hard at me, shaking earth from the bottom of a clump of weeds and then tossing it. "Yup. You are. O.K. Well, let me just say first I've been meaning to call." She sniffed. "I've had it in mind for some time to write you or call and explain things—I just haven't actually *done* it. I've been kind of crazy."

"Oh, I feel so much better already."

She swiped a hand over her forehead, leaving more dirt, and then rubbed her mouth on the back of a glove. "You think this is all about you, don't you?"

I said nothing.

"Sarah had a little episode last week and had to be in the hospital a couple nights. Nothing fun for us, believe me."

"So why couldn't you at least let me know?"

She pulled a few more weeds, tossed them to one side, and frowned at the ground.

"A phone call, anything to do the trick," I said.

"Oh, so I'm obligated to you now? Is that it?" She patted the earth around one plant and then moved on to the next, still squatting. I let a few seconds pass, watching her pull, shake out, and toss weeds. I was about to ask if Sarah was all right when she cleared her throat and started again. "While I was in the hospital with Sarah I got to thinking you and I should really cool things off anyway. Kind of stop before we get started. I mean, this was never meant to go anywhere, right? I'm a married woman and we have nothing in common to speak of. You're a nice enough man, I'm sure, but why get all mixed up hurting each other's feelings and et cetera? Since then," she sighed heavily, "since I got back, which is only like a week, for Christ's sake, I just haven't had it in me, haven't been in the *mood*, to call anyone. O.K.?"

"It's O.K. for you, I'm sure."

"There's nothing for you to be bitter about, Stan." The way she said this I knew we weren't finished. There was more she had to say. She continued pulling weeds, then stopped suddenly and looked at me. "You know, maybe if you hadn't always been so submissive . . ." I waited for her to go on. Her eyes were watery, blue and gray. With my old girlfriend, the nurse, toward the end we had a lot of these fights where we'd stand in my living room, or hers, just staring at each other without speaking, not knowing what to say. This almost felt like the same thing, except now one corner of Marie's mouth kept turning up slightly, as if she were about to laugh. "Stanley. Look," she said finally. "If you came here to make love to me, why not just say so? We can skip the part where you insult me because you feel insulted. We can get right to it, if you want."

I shook my head. "That is not why I came here."

"It isn't?" She stood up, let her gardening gloves drop on the ground, then took both my hands in hers. "You're sure?"

"Of course I'm sure!"

"O.K. It's O.K." She took a step

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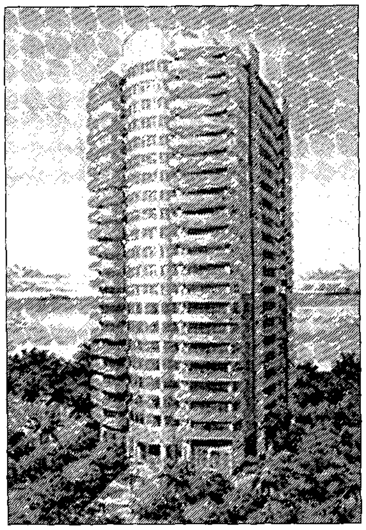

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closer so that she was standing on my feet, and I couldn't see the dirt smears on her face anymore. There was that familiar smell of her cigarettes and the lotion she used and the way her body felt against mine, as if she knew everything that was happening under my skin. "Isn't this better?" she said, and she started to sway like we were dancing. There was a rhythm to it. While we swayed she sang—no words, just a kind of crazy humming from the back of her throat, like she was making fun of both of us. Once or twice I kissed her, but she kept moving her mouth away from me and back again. I felt myself begin to loosen and stretch against the inside of my shorts, and pressed my pelvis harder against hers. "You crazy man. You want to make love to me?"

She dipped back in my arms until we fell down, her head halfway underneath one of the tomato plants, where there were some sour-smelling tomatoes almost flat on the ground like they had been deflated, with black ants climbing over them, in and out of the tears in their skin. I wished we would move a little to the left so I didn't have to see this, but there was no time. She opened my fly, and I yanked my pants down and pulled aside one leg of her shorts to reach her. She wasn't wearing anything underneath. This time I was perfectly in control. Even after I was inside her I felt myself continuing to loosen and grow. When I came she snapped her head back against the ground.

"Oh," she said, "Stanley, that was nice," and when I tried to move away from her to relieve my knees, which were pressing into some rocks, she pulled me fiercely to her. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"Nowhere."

Again I tried to move a little, and she clamped her forearms around me. "Where are you going?"

She finally released me, and we sat next to each other on the ground for a while, knees touching. I was surprised at how happy she seemed. She scooped some of my come from between her legs. "I've never had sex with a man in a garden, let alone in my own back yard." She laughed and wiped her hand off in the dirt vigorously, but not like she was disgusted. "Next thing you know, you'll be having me make love to you in some parking lot!"

"That's not really my taste, Marie."

"I know. It's too bad." But she sounded more amused than disappointed. "Now I have to go." She drew her legs to one side, lifted herself on her hands, and stood. "Clean up a little, check in on Sarah. She's not quite out of the woods, you know." She looked down at me for a second like she thought I should be feeling sorry for her, and started walking away, her sandals slapping her heels. "I'll call you later."

"Sure you will."

"Bad idea, Stan. Now you've put it in my mind that maybe I won't, or shouldn't." She continued up the walkway to her house.

I SHOULD have stayed away, but I didn't. A few days later, standing across the street in her neighbor's front yard, I saw what I didn't want to see. Another man—the husband visiting, maybe—on that porch swing, watching the women come and go. He looked relaxed and dopey, maybe a little like I had, with a beer in one hand and two sticks of celery in the other. I watched him munch and sip, munch and sip, and after the sisters went inside for their nightly routine I went a little closer for a better look. He was not a bit like me—a big suave guy with a blond mustache. He was in slacks and a dress shirt loosened at the collar. Probably he was one of the doctors who had taken care of Sarah at the hospital, if he wasn't the husband. I have no idea if he saw me. I wasn't making any great effort to hide. He wouldn't know who I was or what I wanted anyway. He swung back and forth, and the chains on the porch swing creaked just like they had when I was sitting in it. My porch! I wanted to yell. My swing!

I went around to the other side of the house, where I saw Marie and Sarah, in Sarah's room—Sarah in a nightgown, Marie with her hair tied back, still in the clothes she must have worn that day, a greenish, shimmery blouse open one button too far, and those ripped jeans. Behind the window screen they were hazy, like a painting. Marie sat behind Sarah and started rubbing her shoulders. Sarah's head immediately sagged forward from the pleasure of being touched. After a while, Marie said something I couldn't hear and patted the bed beside her.

I watched until Marie had brushed Sarah's hair, smeared her lips with Vaseline, kissed her, turned on a night-light, and flicked out the lights. Then I went to the window, stepped through the short pine shrubs growing there, and tapped lightly at the bottom of her screen. "Sarah," I whispered. "Sarah, come here." There was a sound of sheets being thrown back and then her feet squeaking on the floor. She was a blur behind the screen, a big white shape in a flowery gown. She shifted from foot to foot. "You're supposed to have feelings for me," I said. She went back to her bed, sank down, and pulled the covers up over her head. She didn't move. Cicadas ratcheted. A car went by on the other side of the house, radio booming higher and then lower as it shifted into the distance.

After a while I heard their footsteps inside—first Marie's, light and uneven; then his, heavier and trudging—and seconds later the front screen snapping shut, her voice calling out just after it. For a moment I was sure he'd find me out. I crouched in the bushes until I saw him go by on the sidewalk, strutting, his lips pursed, whistling—happily oblivious. Even after he was gone, I stayed down awhile, not sure if Marie would remain inside or go into the back yard for a smoke. I heard sheets moving on the other side of the screen—Sarah sighing, the bed creaking—then nothing. My knees felt like they would pop from squatting, so I stepped out of the bushes and turned around.

What I saw when I looked back inside the window was so pretty—Sarah and Marie curled around each other, front to back in the bed, their hands moving over each other's arms and shoulders, one turning her face back so their cheeks were almost touching. They were like an underwater plant, the way their arms and legs moved, everything about them matching. And after a minute their hands came together on the stomach of the one who lay with her back to the other, and their bodies began falling into the breathing rhythm of sleep. One sister's hair lay over the other's neck. One pair of feet were bare, the other had on blue socks. I tried to remember what it had been like when I was with Marie. I closed my eyes and all I saw was houses. I saw ladders against walls, and windows with no outside fixtures, glass taped and ledges ready for paint. I saw Marie's house, too, newly painted—so crisp in its fresh colors you'd never guess, underneath, how scaly and worn to splinters the boards were. ♦

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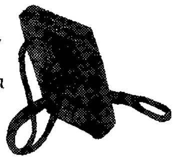

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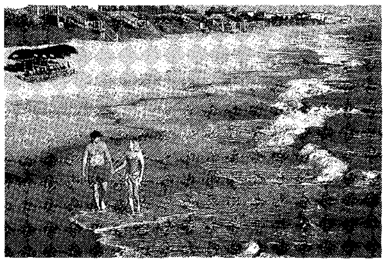

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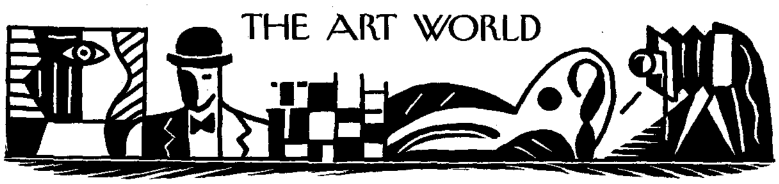

THE ART WORLD

JACKIE'S THINGS

Why we care more about them than she did.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

WHATEVER else the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis may have been—icon, sibyl, muse, tragic heroine—she was also the product of a certain class and a certain period in the history of American taste. That class and period, which could be described as Eastern Seaboard Old Money, circa 1910-50, did not go in for conspicuous display. Its domestic interiors were comfortable, understated, and remarkably homogeneous: you could almost always predict the kind of overstuffed furniture, unremarkable pictures, and standardized decorative objects you would find in them. No one thing stood out above the rest, no object had the effrontery to call attention to itself. This was an aesthetic that reached its apogee under the tutelage of Elisabeth Draper and Sister Parish, interior decorators who banished any hint of the "decorated" look, and it was also the expression of the élite, Anglophile, haut-Wasp establishment that used to run things in this country. The young Jacqueline Bouvier absorbed it as her birthright; the rooms she furnished and inhabited were indistinguishable from the rooms she had grown up in. One of the ironies of the upcoming sale of her estate, at Sotheby's in late April, is that conspicuous display, stardom, and record prices will become the fate of some extremely quiet and unassuming artifacts.

Sotheby's is playing it very cool, by putting low estimates on nearly every lot. Do you fancy one of Jackie's three hunting saddles, to show off at the next meeting of the Peapack Hounds? The estimated price is only three hundred to five hundred dollars, and for a few hundred more you can pick up a set of Jack's golf clubs: the monogram on the bag reads "J.F.K. Washington, D.C." What about a Louis XV Gilt-Tooled Red Morocco Leather Small Casket, circa 1770, made originally for Marie Antoinette? One of the most historically significant items in the sale, its price is estimated from twenty-five to thirty-five thousand dollars. If that's not in your range, think about the slightly clunky Empire-Style Ormolu-Mounted Slant-Front Desk that Jackie inherited from her father, John B. Bouvier (fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars), or maybe one of J.F.K.'s even clunkier oak rocking chairs: two of them are in the sale, each one valued from three thousand to five thousand dollars. Still too high? Don't give up: there are plenty of nicely framed prints for less than two hundred dollars; there's a great deal of costume jewelry, some of it worn on historic occasions; and a group of "approximately fourteen" Miscellaneous Woven Baskets (approximately?) estimated at a hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars for the lot. If you're really determined to own a piece of Jackie, this is your moment.

What we have here, though, is not exactly a yard sale. Sotheby's expects that many first-time customers will be bidding, and that the association value of the merchandise will drive prices up, up, up, as it did in the Duchess of Windsor sale and in the Andy Warhol sale. The total take may well top the Windsor auction's $50.3 million, even though there are not many big-ticket items here to fight over. When Warhol's estate came on the block at Sotheby's, in 1988, the paintings were sold separately from the cookie jars and Fiesta ware. This won't happen at the Onassis sale; an eclectic assortment of material is being offered at each of the nine sessions (spread over four days), because the estate contains so few important works of art. It is not that Jackie didn't appreciate great art. In her league, though, to spend that kind of money on art or on anything else—even assuming you had it to spend—would have been considered a touch vulgar.

IN the early sixties, Roy Davis, the New York art dealer who framed most of the pictures the Kennedys acquired when they were in the White House, introduced Jackie to the work of Maurice Prendergast, an American Post-Impressionist painter whose work was somewhat undervalued at the time. She loved it, she said, but, at ten thousand dollars a picture, it was much too expensive for her. (Years later, she did buy a small Prendergast for her daughter, Caroline.) Even when she was married to Onassis, and could presumably have had anything she wanted, she never bought important paintings. "In 1969, Jackie did ask me to buy her a watercolor by John Singer Sargent," Davis recalled recently. "She'd heard that it was coming up for sale in London, and she said would I go over and buy it, if I thought it was good enough. I went over and I did buy it; I think the price was forty-five hundred dollars. I brought it back, and she said, 'I love it—I'll buy it.' That unsettled me a little, because I thought she'd already agreed to buy it, and I'd spent nearly five thousand dollars that I didn't have. She could be somewhat casual about those things." The Sargent watercolor, called "Head of an Arab," is in the catalogue, estimated at a hundred thousand to a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. It is one of a handful of valuable pictures there, among them another Sargent watercolor, called "Venetian Girl," and a fine equine portrait of "Lord Bateman's Arabian," by the eighteenth-century English artist John Wootton (eighty to a hundred and twenty thousand dollars each); a clutch of Indian miniatures; and a 1960 drawing by Robert Rauschenberg (eighty to a hundred thousand dollars), which was a gift from the artist—it incorporates images of both Jackie and J.F.K.

The rest of the pictures—dozens and dozens of them—are the kind your eye passes over without lingering: English hunting prints, French and Italian landscape drawings by "school of" artists, architectural watercolors, caricatures, naïve paintings, theatre sets, and a great many bird and animal studies, with an emphasis on the horse. It goes without saying that there are several Audubon prints: households like Jackie's are incomplete without Audubons. One of the few surprises, and just about the only example of something that you might not have found in one of her mother's houses, is a group of paintings by Albert York, a reclusive contemporary artist whose haunted landscapes and still-lifes are greatly prized by

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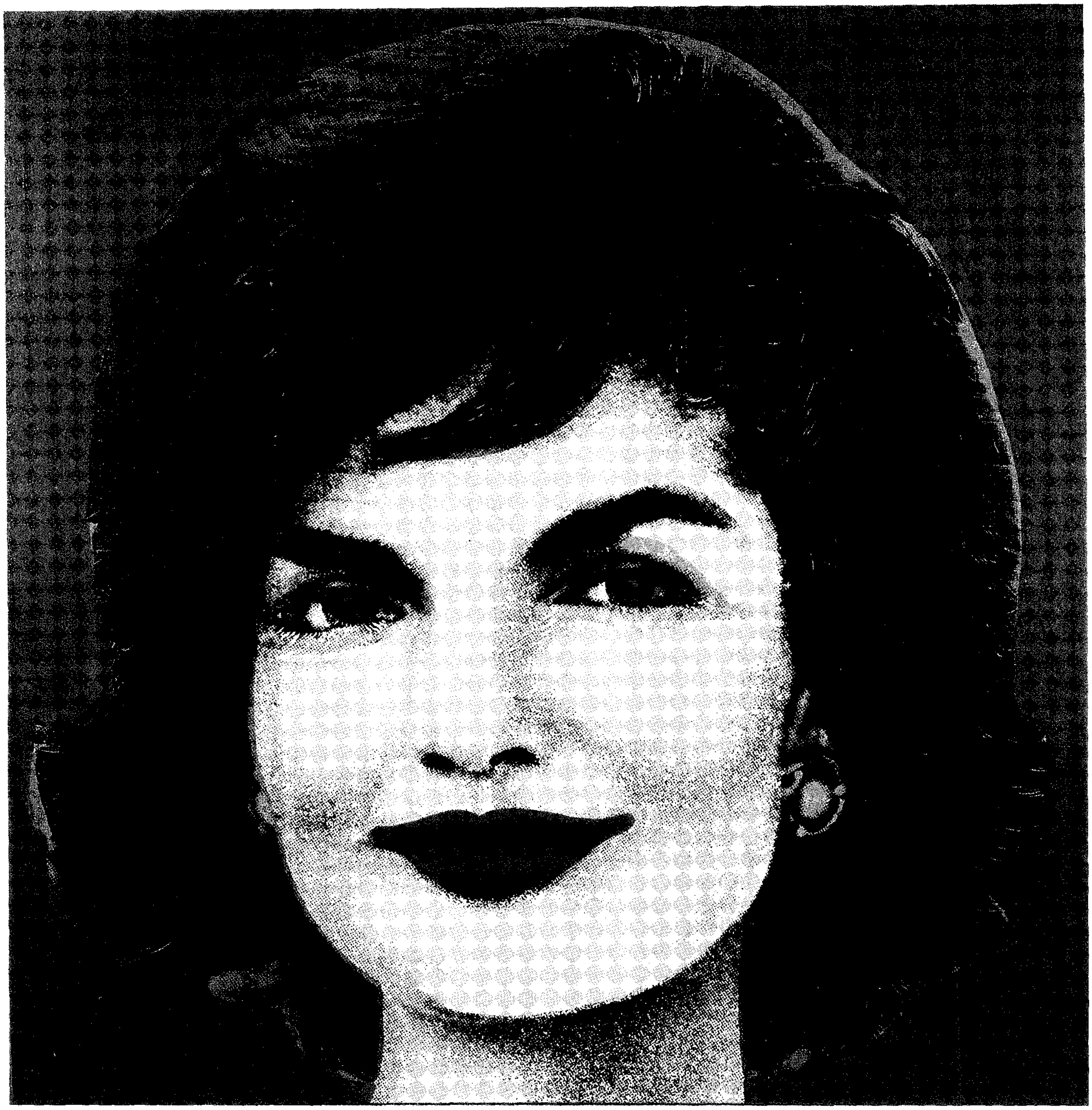

"Jackie": A 1964 portrait (not included in her estate) by Andy Warhol, another mythologized American collector.

several avant-garde artists and collectors. Jackie saw his work at Roy Davis's gallery (Davis & Langdale) on East Sixtieth Street, and liked it so much that she acquired five York paintings over the years; the last one was bought for her shortly before she died, by her friend Maurice Tempelsman.

In Jackie's large Fifth Avenue apartment, which is where many of the objects in the sale came from, her pictures hung in symmetrical groupings on the panelled walls, or stood (if they were small) on side tables, along with the sort of objets you would expect to find in such a setting: ormolu clocks, marble obelisks, brass candlesticks, Sèvres porcelains, cloisonné boxes, and a few Greek and Roman antiquities, which held great appeal for J.F.K. Jackie's taste was more at home in the French eighteenth century—a preference that elicited some criticism when she applied it to her redecoration of the White House interiors—but somehow, although she bought a lot of Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture and decorative objects, and some English antiques as well, the rooms she lived in never had either a European or a "period" look. Even rare, historically important pieces were used in ways that did not call attention to themselves. A pair of Louis XVI fauteuils that Thomas Jefferson is believed to have brought back from Paris to Monticello, and which the Kennedys had in the West Sitting Room of the White House when they lived there, ended up on either side of an undistinguished but cozy settee in her New York living room. Sotheby's estimates the price for the pair at ten thousand to fifteen thousand dollars. (The settee is from five hundred to eight hundred dollars.)

COMFORT—refined but uninflected comfort—was the basis of Jackie's taste in domestic arrangements. She wanted nothing showy, nothing conspicuous, no design "statements" to command the eye and frighten the horses. There were tons of books, of course, in floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and also in neat piles on tables, under tables and taborets, and against walls. At least a quarter of the nearly twelve hundred lots in the sale are books, singly or in groups. This was to some degree a reflection of her professional life: she worked for almost twenty years as a book editor, first at Viking and later at Doubleday, where she was responsible for about a dozen new books a year. A lot of famous writers sent copies of their books to her, like burnt offerings. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber inscribed a copy of "Le Défi Américain," "*Pour Madame J. F. Kennedy, en hommage respectueux.*" Norman Mailer sent "Harlot's Ghost," his novel about the C.I.A., with an anxious inscription reading, "Jackie, I don't know if you will care to read this or not, but I want you to have it." Robert Lowell, Truman Capote, Sir John Pope-Hennessy, Alexander Liberman, Ludwig Bemelmans, and David Ormsby-Gore all wanted her to have their books.

Everything fitted together seamlessly—books, pictures, furniture, objects, rugs, silver, china, lamps, saddles, golf clubs, the car in the garage (a 1992 BMW four-door sedan, dark metallic green with tan interior, 10,032 miles, at eighteen thousand to twenty-two thousand dollars). The whole effect was a little boring, of course—perfect and perfectly predictable taste always is—but it should be seen in its proper context, as the background of a complex and far from boring life. In those blandly opulent surroundings, Jackie could be her unpredictable, funny, and sometimes mischievous self. (Her school chum and White House social secretary Nancy Tuckerman, in a touching memoir that serves as the introduction to the Sotheby's catalogue, writes that Jackie was "the naughtiest girl in the class" at the Chapin School.) Collecting things and decorating rooms were by no means her main interests. Jackie's real life—post-Onassis, at any rate—had to do mainly with her children, her work, and her friends, and one of her most impressive achievements was to keep those areas completely private.

But in that case, as the gossipmongers have been asking, why are her beloved children putting her possessions up for auction at Sotheby's, with all the colossal publicity that such a sale is bound to generate? According to Nancy Tuckerman, Jackie often said that this would be the only sensible solution, because estate taxes and the sheer volume of what the lawyers call "tangible assets" would require it. Besides the New York apartment, she owned three houses (in Martha's Vineyard, New Jersey, and Hyannisport), and something would have to go. John and Caroline kept some things, and they gave a great many items to the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, in Boston, but the kind of taste that Jackie inherited from her mother rarely gets passed down anymore, except by Ralph Lauren. It's also easy to understand why the children wouldn't have had a keen interest in their mother's high-priced jewelry, much of which came from Aristotle Onassis. Although Jackie was photographed wearing the forty-carat, marquise-cut diamond engagement ring from Harry Winston that Ari gave her in 1968 (it carries the highest estimate of any item in the sale: five hundred to six hundred thousand dollars), she was rarely seen in the Van Cleef & Arpels dazzlers he showered on her; she much preferred simple jewelry, and she wore it sparingly but with great flair. It is a surprise, though, to find that Sotheby's is selling six of Aaron Shikler's studies for his White House portrait of Jackie, together with a number of studies for his portrait of John and Caroline. Shikler might be surprised, too, since these were probably gifts from him to the family.

The family is nevertheless entitled to the privacy of its decisions—the privacy that Jackie carved out against such incredible odds. On Martha's Vineyard last summer, the cocktail-party circuit suddenly "knew" that Jackie's beachfront house was being sold, for ten million dollars, to Oprah Winfrey. The house was never up for sale, of course, but that won't stop the rumor mill. This sort of glib, gullible silliness played no part in Jackie's well-ordered, comfortable, useful, and unpretentious life—a life that will yield none of its complex secrets to the hoopla of a big public sale. ♦

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BOOKS

MANN IN LOVE

Passion gets its due in a new life of Thomas Mann.

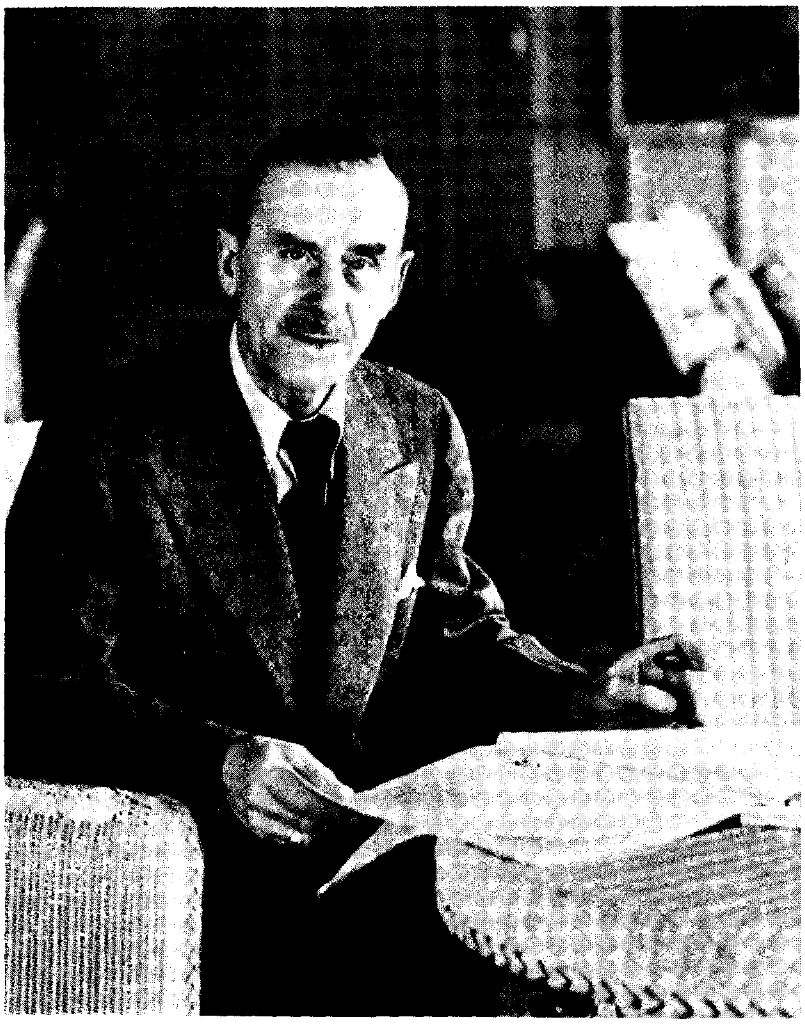
BY ALEX ROSS

“Come, I will take you down underneath this impassive exterior, I will tell you what to say of me, / Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of the tenderest lover.” The words are Walt Whitman’s, from “Calamus.” They are also, surprisingly, Thomas Mann’s, in a lecture delivered before a Berlin audience in 1922. It was a fateful occasion: the most celebrated of German novelists, up to that time a man of reactionary tendencies, stepped forward to embrace the young, ill-loved, ailing Weimar Republic. Certainly it was not outlandish for a born-again German democrat to borrow lines from the poet laureate of American pluralism. But there was something impertinent, even lusty, in Mann’s invocation of Whitman. From the start, the speech had a distractingly flirtatious tone: “German youth must be won over, so much is fact; and they are to be won, that must be a fact too, since they are not bad, but only proud and stiff-necked and prone to shuffle their feet.”

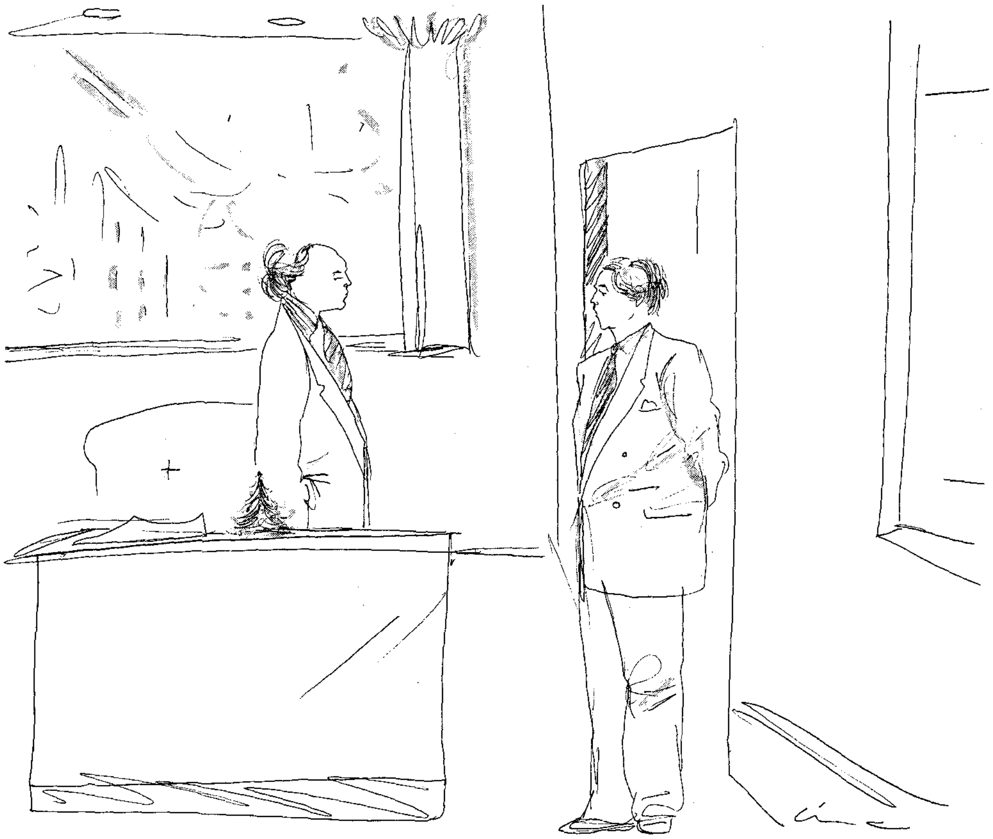
Whitman’s lines capture much of the character of Thomas Mann: his penchant for the impassive, towering façade, his urge to broadcast passions from it. The game of masks is a common one in literature, but it is difficult to think of another writer who was so strongly divided against himself, oscillating between the grand and the abject. He delighted in playing outsized ceremonial roles: conscience of humanity, pillar of the bourgeoisie, winner of the Nobel Prize. He also made himself the poet of the outcast, the godfather of all broken hearts. In old age, as his eminence swelled to absurd proportions, he became openly mischievous, purveying the erotic comedy of “The Holy Sinner” and the unfinished “Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man.” In that farewell masterpiece, a handsome trickster bewitches everyone in his path, including a melancholy Scottish lord who bears Thomas Mann’s exact physical description. “I have enough dignity to squander quite a lot,” Mann once remarked.

He died in 1955—eighty years old, immensely famous, much honored, much scorned. Hipsters dismissed him as a superannuated nineteenth-century litterateur. But the old man left a time bomb ticking beneath his monumental reputation: twenty-six years of diaries, unopened until two decades after his death. When the first volumes surfaced, they sprayed sex and politics in all directions, forcing a reëvaluation of Mann’s career. Now all the diaries have finally been published, and three biographies have followed within the past twelve months: Donald Prater’s “Thomas Mann: A Life” (Oxford; $35), Ronald Hayman’s “Thomas Mann: A Biography” (Scribner; $35), and, most recently, Anthony Heilbut’s “Thomas Mann: Eros and Literature” (Knopf; $40). Knopf has also issued “The Magic Mountain,” the second in its series of fresh Mann translations: John E. Woods’ brisk, plainspoken prose has cleared away the cobwebs and confusions of the original translations, by Helen Lowe-Porter.

Of the new biographies, Prater’s is the one for those who need to hear about Mann’s daily agenda, after-dinner speeches, habits of grooming, and the like. While often crushingly dull, particularly when traversing Mann’s later, world-humanistic years, it is written with the grace of a veteran biographer. Hayman’s book tries to crack the façade, mixing the public and the private; it collapses into cheap psychoanalytic speculation. Heilbut, whose previous book was “Exiled in Paradise,” an excellent study of the German émigré community in the United


ULLSTEIN

Mann advocated absolute physical repression and endless public fantasy.



"One more thing, Hasbruck. Lose the Christmas tree."

States, is much more interesting. He shows real sympathy for Mann's work—its grandeurs, sorrows, sly wit. He also has sympathy for the man. While the other biographers are satisfied with an exterior coldness, this one wants to find the author's heart.

HEILBUT'S breezy, impressionistic book—not so much a biography as a free-ranging thematic essay—will be controversial for its insistent concentration on sexuality. Mann is presented, more or less, as an author of homoerotic fiction. Imputations of any sort of homosexuality to Thomas Mann still pique some readers: they either dismiss the biographical evidence or activate a nostrum about sex having nothing to do with literature. Mann himself thought otherwise; he liked to quote Nietzsche to the effect that "the degree and kind of a man's sexuality reach to the highest peaks of his intellect." Sexuality is not at the center of Thomas Mann's work, but it is near the center, and it deserves a more accurate and knowing treatment than it has received in the past. The more we learn about this sphinxlike writer, the more tricks and wonders we find in his gloriously egotistical prose.

Born in Lübeck, into a wealthy merchant family, Mann received a rigorous Prussian schooling but was otherwise left to his own indolent devices. After his father, the austere Senator Mann, fell prematurely dead, the eighteen-year-old Thomas moved with his mother to the gilded city of Munich. The young writer savored Munich's decadent milieu, but also kept himself aloof. In "Buddenbrooks" (1901) he told the story of his family as a degeneration unto death. In short stories he wrote of aesthetes, cripples, religious madmen, women with crushes on mediocre beauties. His most memorable early creations were boys: Hanno Buddenbrook, the end of the family line; Tonio Kröger, tagging behind his handsome, stupid friend, commuting desire into literature. The style blended archness and directness to striking effect:

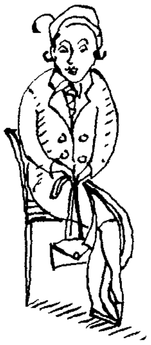
> Tonio was walking in silence. He was suffering. He had drawn his rather slanting brows together and rounded his lips as if to whistle, and was gazing into vacancy with his head tilted to one side. This attitude and facial expression were characteristic of him. . . .
>
> The fact was that Tonio loved Hans Hansen, and had already suffered a great deal on his account.

Mann's impassive and tender sides had begun their slow dance.

It has long been known that Hans Hansen is a replica of Armin Martens, Mann's first love. His other homoerotic involvements form the slender emotional thread of Heilbut's narrative. There was a second boy in school, who inspired Hans Castorp's unforgotten adolescent crush in "The Magic Mountain." At age twenty-four, Mann met an attractive, insubstantial violinist named Paul Ehrenberg, whose friendship he afterward called "that central experience of my heart." Shattered by this inept affair, he escaped into marriage. Except for a famous episode on a beach in Venice, his deeper desires seem to have smoldered until his fifty-third year, when he fell in love with the seventeen-year-old Klaus Heuser. Finally, at the age of seventy-five, Mann took a liking to a young waiter in a Zurich hotel and immortalized him in "Felix Krull." When the diaries drenched in yearning for this man appeared a few years ago, German reporters tracked him down and found him working at the St. Regis in New York. He became a minor celebrity in Germany and appeared on television.

Mann's pantheon of average boys—what he impishly called a "gallery which no 'literary history' will report"—loomed large in his consciousness. There is, however, no evidence that anything *happened*. Too eager to fill in the blanks, Heilbut argues that the Ehrenberg episode must have had a sexual component, since Mann later called it "one of my greatest love affairs." But Mann spoke similarly of the involvement with young Heuser, and in that case we have evidence neglected by Heilbut: the critic Karl Werner Böhm sought out the former boy in 1986, found he had grown up gay, and learned that the "affair" had consisted of polite conversation. Mann, to the end of his life, could not concretize gay sex. (He enjoyed Gore Vidal's "The City and the Pillar" but wrote ingenuously in his diary, "How can one sleep with men?") Heilbut also has trouble reconciling the boy episodes with Mann's fifty-year marriage to Katia Pringsheim. To have fathered six children was, perhaps, above and beyond the call of duty.

WAS Mann's art, then, a form of sublimation, a deflection of desire? No. Sublimation suggests that sexuality is suppressed or transformed. Mann channelled his unrequited longings for young men into stories about unrequited longings for young men. In "Death in Venice" he transcribed his own "emotional adventure": Gustav von Aschenbach, an eminent author whose curriculum vitae is stocked with Mann's abandoned projects, looks at a beautiful Polish boy on the beach, exactly as his creator did on a 1911 vacation. "Nothing was invented," Mann later said—except, of course, that Aschenbach has no family in tow and winds up dead. Mann intended to pay ironic tribute to the sort of half-concealed, hyperaestheticized boy-love celebrated by cultish poets like August von Platen and Stefan George. Listen to Mann's impossibly arch narrator recommending literary discretion as Aschenbach composes a "choice piece of prose" within sight of the boy: "It is as well that the world knows only a fine piece of work and not also its origins, the conditions under which it came into being; for knowledge of the sources of an artist's inspiration would often confuse readers and shock them, and the excellence of the writing would be of no avail." This elegant formula mocks itself to death. "Death in Venice" exposes the secret sources not only of Aschenbach's work but of Mann's own.



Humorless variations on that cosmically laughing sentence have appeared in a great many critical glosses on "Death in Venice." We are told that Mann's homosexual impulses, if they did indeed exist, disappeared into the fabric of his writing. Such are the dangers of the ironist's trade: things can be taken at face value. Mann also left himself open to the more plausible suggestion that "Death in Venice" was a condemnation of dirty love, with disease and death as the pervert's reward. At first reading, the terrible swiftness of Aschenbach's demise does feel like the swish of a moralistic guillotine. The fact is that creeping death operates as a general formal principle in Mann's writing. Here, as the translator David Luke points out, the fall begins not when Aschenbach first thinks about the boy but when he says nothing to him, fails to warn him of a cholera epidemic. Which is not to say that the story wishes Aschenbach had put his paws on young Tadzio. It has him die at the moment he rises to follow. Defying most modern canons of healthy sexuality, Mann advocated absolute physical repression and endless public fantasy. He was a masterful innocent, as pure as the driving snow.

"DEATH IN VENICE" achieved sensational success on the eve of the First World War. As the German soldiers went off to war, they all had the story nestled in their knapsacks, or so Mann liked to think. Boisterous pro-war pamphlets followed from the same pen. The most provocative argument in the Heilbut book is that Mann's turn toward militant conservatism and his subsequent liberal reversal cannot be understood apart from his struggle to find a fuller expression of his sexuality. His first solution was to vent his desire in the form of an enthusiasm for German might and for the fair-haired, blue-eyed soldiery who embodied it. The tone of cleansing rage that had hummed throughout his youthful writing reached a fortissimo in his major wartime work—the wild, internecine polemic "Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man." With it came a new vocabulary, celebrating "voluptuous emotions, high-minded comradeship, heartfelt piousness, and *other* things we do not know about." In the diaries, he called the "Reflections" an "expression of my sexual inversion."

After intense confusion—he would welcome Communism one day, embrace proto-Fascism the next—he came forth with his astounding 1922 speech in praise of the Republic. The text has never been fully accessible to English readers; Lowe-Porter's translation bowdlerized it. Heilbut points out that the climax of Mann's argument for liberal democracy is a paean to peaceable homoeroticism, inspired by Whitman: "I will dare, in this connection, which still remains a political connection, to discuss—with all respect for your sensitivity—a topic that has been implicit in my last words. I mean the zone of Eros in which the generally accepted law of sexual polarity proves to be invalid, and in which

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like with like, whether mature masculinity and adoring youth, joined in a dream of themselves as gods, or young males drawn to their own mirror image, are bound in a passionate community." It doesn't stop there: Mann goes on to praise Whitman's "all-embracing kingdom of phallic holiness, abounding phallic ardor." As politics, it is completely daft; he might as well have been reciting a Dada manifesto. But the bravery amazes.

Throughout the nineteen-twenties, Mann probed the outer limits of his natural reserve. He wrote a tribute to the sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, who was working for the repeal of Paragraph 175, Germany's anti-gay ordinance. His diaries are enlivened by thumbnail sketches of shirtless gardeners, smiling soldiers in trains, and, embarrassingly, his own teen-age son Klaus. "The Magic Mountain" makes many interesting swerves in its later chapters, not least the scene in which Hans Castorp listens to a recording of Schubert's "Der Lindenbaum" and receives intimations of a Whitmanesque "word of love" resting on his dead cousin's lips. There is also a remarkable essay, published in 1930, on Count Platen, the much mocked nineteenth-century lyric poet. Mann defends him in forthright, self-conscious terms:

> Out of ignorance, out of a discretion grown obsolete, literary history has very foolishly tried to talk its way around the fundamental and decisive fact of Platen's existence: his exclusively homoerotic disposition. . . . He himself recognized this most profound of his impulses, and then again did not recognize it. He suggests it, in the form of a pious devotion to the beautiful, artistic purity, artistic consecration before higher things, even in love. But this half-understanding, this inability to see that his love was not something higher but instead a love like anyone else's, albeit with smaller prospects for happiness in his own time—this misunderstanding made him aggrieved, terribly bitter over the contempt and maltreatment that his glowing devotions met at nearly every turn; and his bitterness manifestly contributed to his falling-out with Germany and everything German, driving him toward exile and lonely death.

Three years before the fact, Mann foreshadows his own breakup with the Germans.

Heilbut persuasively argues that Mann's bizarre erotic democracy was, in fact, an attempt to fashion a liberal alternative to the longbow-and-loincloth politics practiced by elements of the Nazi movement. He might have extended his analysis to Mann's final major statement as a German citizen, which carried the oblique title "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner." Delivered as a lecture inside and outside Germany in 1933, this long essay dared to present Hitler's favorite composer as, variously, a decadent, a dilettante, and a *Kulturbolschewist*. In one astonishing passage, Wagner is shown at work in his study, ensconced in a plush, warm, almost onanistic environment. Mann first paints a subtle scene of sublimation laid bare, then rudely assaults the Nazi kitsch to which the composer's ambiguous creations had been reduced: "The brilliant satin robes are the luxury in which he sits down to work in the mornings, to perform his bitter and onerous task. Decked out in these, he acquires the 'mood of artistic sensuality' he needs in order to summon up the world of ancient Nordic heroes and the sublime symbolism of nature, to fashion the young, golden-locked hero forging the sword of victory on the anvil while the sparks fly—scenes and images that cause the hearts of German youth to swell with lofty feelings of manly pride." Such lascivious sarcasm only added to the Nazis' hatred of Mann. The Wagner lecture tour turned into exile.

ONCE Mann had left Germany, his sexual politicking ceased. At first, he was paralyzed with fear: the loss of a German readership seemed like the end of the world. When volumes of his diaries temporarily went astray, he imagined in horror what Goebbels might do with them. In American exile, he stuck to a simpler anti-Fascist line; college kids weren't ready for sensual socialism. But the erotic content of his fiction intensified. His Biblical epic on the theme of Joseph obsessively celebrates male beauty, and the hundreds of pages devoted to Potiphar's Wife are his greatest and gentlest portrait of hapless passion. The later diaries show Mann ever more liberally uninhibited: he flirts with elevator attendants ("*Flirt mit dem Lift boy*"), reads gay fiction ("The love-play between Jim and Bob is quite wonderful"), calls Richard Nixon "evil." He debates with himself whether the sexual revelations should stand: "Why am I writing all this? To destroy it all in good time before I die? Or do I want the world to *know* me? I believe it knows me already, at least some experts do, more of me than is admitted."

The strength of Heilbut's book can be measured next to the misadventures of the other biographers in the *Zone der Erotik*. Hayman portrays Mann as a remote, faintly incestuous father who helped precipitate his son Klaus's homosexuality, drug addiction, and suicide. This psychologically fanciful scenario overlooks the prevalence of suicide in the Mann family tree and in Klaus's whole European generation. Prater mumbles about the "mild aberrations of the bourgeois family-man." If these be mild, the bourgeoisie is in pretty queer shape. Yet it is not right to say, as Heilbut essentially does, that Mann was a homosexual who found fulfillment in left-wing politics. Contemporary-minded to a fault, Heilbut simplistically discerns a sexual-political passage from darkness into light. For example, Mann wrote two fascinating letters in 1920 to the young gay poet Carl Maria Weber, explicating "Death in Venice." Heilbut presents this material as a denial of the story's homosexual content, then juxtaposes the 1922 speech as its liberal apotheosis. But he misconstrues some thorny syntax: Mann in fact states that the world of homosexual feeling is "conditionally"—or, in the second letter, "almost unreservedly"—accessible to him, rather than "scarcely" accessible. These cryptograms are no more or less lucid than anything before or after. There was no breakthrough, no *ecce homo*.

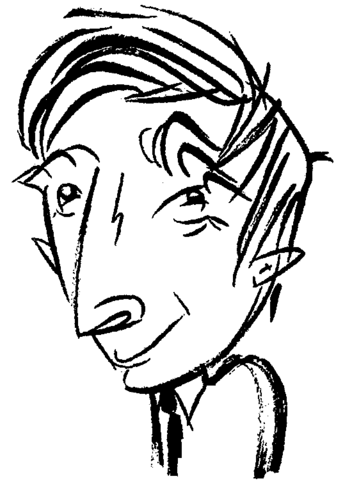
Mann played games with the obvious; he was an incorrigible tease. If we call him ambiguous, as critics often do, we should be clear about exactly what we mean. When he seems to shy away from telling the whole truth, he is working hardest to bring the truth to life. Great storytellers enthrall their listeners by playing their cards close to the vest. Mann, among the very greatest of storytellers, always begins in an innocuous, convivial tone: Grandpapa remembers a time long ago. His incessant hesitations—"almost," "scarcely," "so to speak," "in a certain sense"—are the quiet touches by which his voice acquires personality on the page. They are creases in the impassive exterior, the beginnings of a smile, or a scream. The reader is suddenly spooked by a quick increase in tension, a silent entry of emotion. Desire is the more present for not being spoken straight out. Mann revealed himself most when he wrote of Platen that the poet's traditional literary forms prevented full disclosure.

His stories are always stories of love, what Whitman called the sweet hell within. He lets his readers see, if they wish to see, the degree and kind of his love. But he does not put a name to it—perhaps because it has never belonged to him, he thinks he has no honest right to it. Or perhaps because the names look weak next to the grandeur of his feelings, arrogantly set out before the world. As he writes in "The Magic Mountain," he has already achieved "perfect clarity in ambiguity": "Love is always simply itself, both as a subtle affirmation of life and as the highest passion; love is our sympathy with organic life, the touchingly lustful embrace of what is destined to decay. . . . In God's good name, leave the meaning of love unresolved!" It must be unresolved, so it can be learned again, in the pages of his books. ♦

SUPREME FICTION

America is in the details.

BY GEORGE STEINER



John Updike

TOM BACHTELL

SINCE "Roger's Version," ten years ago, theology has become John Updike's "supreme fiction." That phrase belonged, famously, to Wallace Stevens. With time, vivid affinities are becoming evident between Stevens and Updike. They are the masters of a sensuous abstraction, profoundly American. In this new novel, "In the Beauty of the Lilies" (Knopf; $25.95)—scriptural, hymnic in its very title—Updike's immersion in the literature of American Protestant theology is awesome, as is the virtuosity of his pastiche:

> The young century was thronged with a parade of inventions that amused Clarence when little else did, and the presumptuous, ragged, hopeful sound of a doughty little motorrig brought a ray of innocent energy, such as messenger angels would ride to earth, into his invalid mood. The hoarse receding note drew his consciousness to a fine point, and while that point hung in his skull starlike he fell asleep upon the adamant bosom of the depleted universe.

At the close of the novel, that sleep will turn into apocalyptic nightmare in the fire death, closely modelled on the Davidian cult disaster, of a sect in Colorado:

> Why does God set before us and Jesus this cup brimming with the wine of His wrath, with fire and brimstone and hailstones the size of a talent? Why not give us a nice Coca-Cola or cold cider? Jesus wanted it to pass. He was a young man, with a great future in preaching and healing. But He had to drink that cup, He had to be whipped and humiliated in His naked body and nailed to that cross by big ugly spikes right through the palms of His hands and hung there so He could hardly get breath into His lungs in order to take away old Adam's sin, the sin of the world.

After which flames and gas consume the Temple of True and Actual Faith: "Then there was no more pain, but for the briefest burning edge, like the crinkly orange margin that consumes the paper of a cigarette in advance of the growing tobacco ash."

Between that hot day in the spring of 1910 in Paterson, New Jersey, on which Clarence Wilmot, a Presbyterian clergyman, loses his belief in God and the crazed death of his great-grandson eighty years later, Updike deploys his panopticon. The magic is one of surrealism, but in a literal sense of the word. Things, objects, mechanical-industrial proceedings, interiors, the play of light on fabrics are detailed, anatomized, and held up for sensory inspection with a loving mastery that no other novelist at present can match. Catalogues of foodstuffs, household goods, drugs, silent movies and talkies, engine parts take on a weird, suffocating life force, like rubber plants gone mad in a greenhouse. The real is made surreal.

When a young woman takes off her corset, she divides and parts herself "from the semi-elastic carapace, much as one splits the nubbled belly of a Maine lobster to get at the meat." In the textile

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mills, "hundreds of unravelling shuttles slapped back and forth in their wooden boats by the snapping levers, hundreds of harplike reeds beating in the weft, beating in, beating in, as the heddles lifted and lowered the alternating halves of the warp, lifted and lowered, twenty picks to the minute." We learn the penny prices of Olivilo Soap, Marrow's Boudoir Talc, Sodiphene, and Terra-Derma Laxative, and about the glossy magazines—*Liberty*, *Collier's*, *McClure's*—whose descent from "aspiring Manhattan towers" on a town like Basingstoke, Delaware, is verily an angelic visitation. When young Teddy, Clarence's feeble son, sickens at his first cigar, that nausea becomes lyric: "The end of the cigar was coming apart in his lips, and the cry of the spring peepers from the backyard pond that Horace Pruitt had dug and that was now sludging in sounded like a beam of sound itself swaying, surging, in waves." It is Norman Rockwell country, that of a miniaturist chronicler of the boundless texture of the everyday, incomparable in regard to sex, that "entertaining smooth chute into the dark-red bliss of things."

At moments, the acrobatics of precision, of language becoming the skin of perception, are such as to make it impossible to separate craft from parody. Here is Teddy's daughter Esther, soon after arriving in New York:

> At the Barbizon she found another hothouse, of young women in bloom; humid confidences and gushed news about men and clothes, waitressing jobs and *must* movies were shared from mouth to ear to mouth until it seemed the building had a single, female nervous system, vibrating each morning through the stacked floors to the same smell of coffee and the clanking of depleted shower pipes, flooding the halls with evening perfume as the girls swirled out on stiletto heels to their dates, *jeunes filles en fleur* menstruating on a single merged cycle and turning over in unison in the dead of night as they rose through the gauze of their dreams and sank back again.

The allusion to Proust is almost antithetical: the minutiae of description in Proust are translucid to symbolic significance, to mystery. In Updike, "the dark-red bliss of things" is just and fully that. The wonder is the surface. It is precisely here that technique and theology meld. In a world in which God is either dead or the object of homicidal lunacy, *things* have surged to fantastic, omnivorous life. The more blatant the fiction, the second- or third-handedness (Updike revels in simulating the non-world of movies, of photographs, of television), the more compelling the claim to real presence. The "depleted universe"—depleted by God's exit—has to be filled to brimming with stuff and artifice. The Good Book is the Sears, Roebuck mail-order catalogue. The "delivery"—probably the key word, with all its ambiguities—of a Popular Encyclopaedia, as broken Clarence hawks it from door to door; of the mail and the newspapers (Teddy becomes a mailman); of packaged sex and tinsel by Esther, the movie idol, reflects the appetite of the living, their panic before emptiness. Throughout, and with a dispassionate deliberation that Flaubert would have saluted, Updike favors the vegetable and the inanimate over the human. The foundation for the human was (a vanished) deity. Things can make it on their own.

Clarence, the lapsed man of the cloth, begets Teddy, who carries the mail and begets Esther, who changes her name, rises to glamour, and begets deranged Clark, whom the flames consume in expiation to a nonexistent but vengeful Moloch. Triste copulations alternate with even sadder fellations. History unfolds richly in the background. Currier & Ives will yield to CNN. Distant World Wars, the Depression, the drama of a Lindbergh or a New Deal impinge, sometimes heavily, on the works and days of Paterson and Basingstoke. There is a new weekly, *The New Yorker*, whose cover "had a chalky drawing of white-faced shoppers walking at night . . . past a store window holding a Christmas tree and a hollow-eyed, sinister Santa Claus." The Eisenhower era coincides with the "triumphant, platinum-blonde phase" in Hollywood sex comedies and Esther's career. And the sixties turn out to be "a good decade for death," what with her mother, Ama (Teddy's wife), and J.F.K. As the saga ends, history and privacy fuse in a white heat: Teddy watches the incineration of his grandson on the national news. Between the clips "a commercial about a cruise ship that looks like a New Year's Eve party, with this big-mouthed woman singing how you should see her now."

John Updike's genius, his place beside Hawthorne and Nabokov have never been more assured, or chilling. One puts down this novel with the intimation that America is, very near its center, the saddest country on earth. As Updike puts it, repeatedly, "Have mercy." ♦

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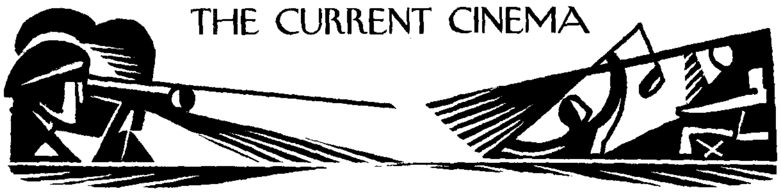
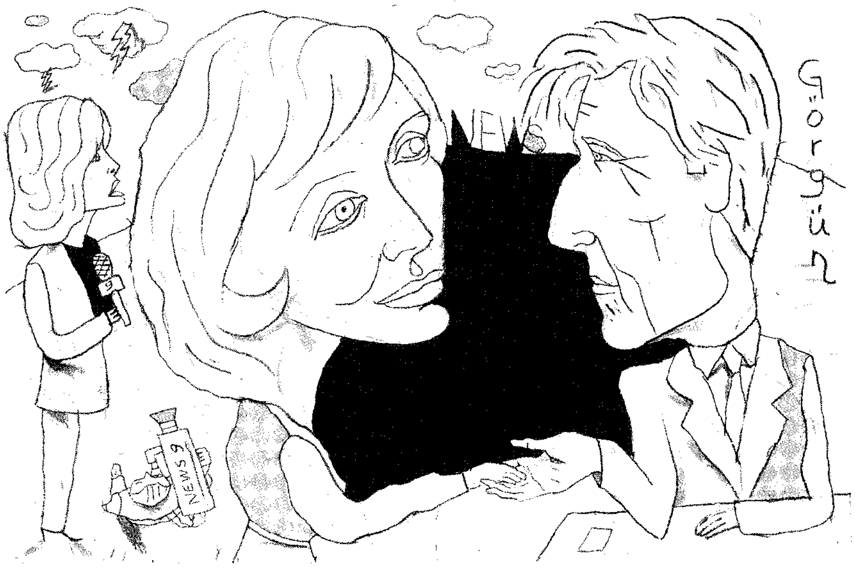


A NOSE FOR NEWS

Can two bright stars heat up a cool medium?

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

IN "Up Close & Personal," a romantic tearjerker set in the TV-news biz (a world not noted for its warmth), Michelle Pfeiffer changes hairdos more often than Hillary Clinton. She goes from long and curly to short and fluffy, from orange-red to Diane Sawyer celestial blond and then to a more corporate mahogany-brown. The film, directed by Jon Avnet, opens with a kaleidoscope of pixels swirling and aligning to form Pfeiffer's face on a studio monitor, a shot that instructs us from the outset that her character is a media creature mutated from nothingness—a string of electronic DNA. As Tally Atwater, a cub reporter who rises to the rank of big-time network anchor, Pfeiffer becomes whatever the camera wants her to be. Her first local-news appearance, as a weathergirl in Miami, is a mortifying experience (pure amateur hour), but the news director spots her star potential. "She eats the lens," he announces. His word carries the authority of a great white hunter's, for he—He—is Warren Justice, a legendary ex-reporter played by Robert Redford. With his all-American superhero name, Warren Justice is Woodward and Bernstein rolled into one, a journalistic crusader who has covered Vietnam and Beirut and joshed with Presidents. Justice's rugged individualism seems right out of the latest J. Peterman catalogue. He mentors and molds his protégée until she conquers her jitters and beams at the camera as if she'd just popped out of the toaster.



Michelle Pfeiffer rises and Robert Redford sets in "Up Close & Personal."

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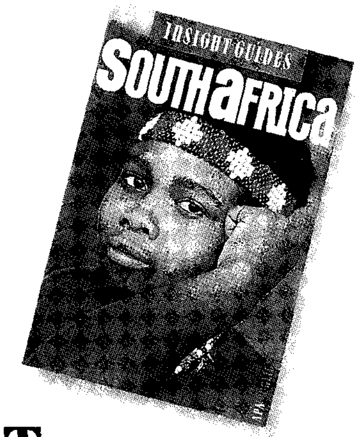
With all their late-night tutorials, it's only a matter of script pages until their furtive eye contact and pent-up feelings turn into a peroxide explosion of passion. The teaming of Pfeiffer and Redford in "Up Close & Personal" is meant to be a throwback to a more radiant, less problematic time in movies, when male and female stars didn't seem so warily fenced off from each other—when romance was a wonderful nip in the air, and the actors carried their heads like lollipops. (I'm thinking of movie romances as differently pleasing as "Roman Holiday" and "The Thomas Crown Affair.")

As such recent flops as "Forget Paris" and "Two If by Sea" have demonstrated,



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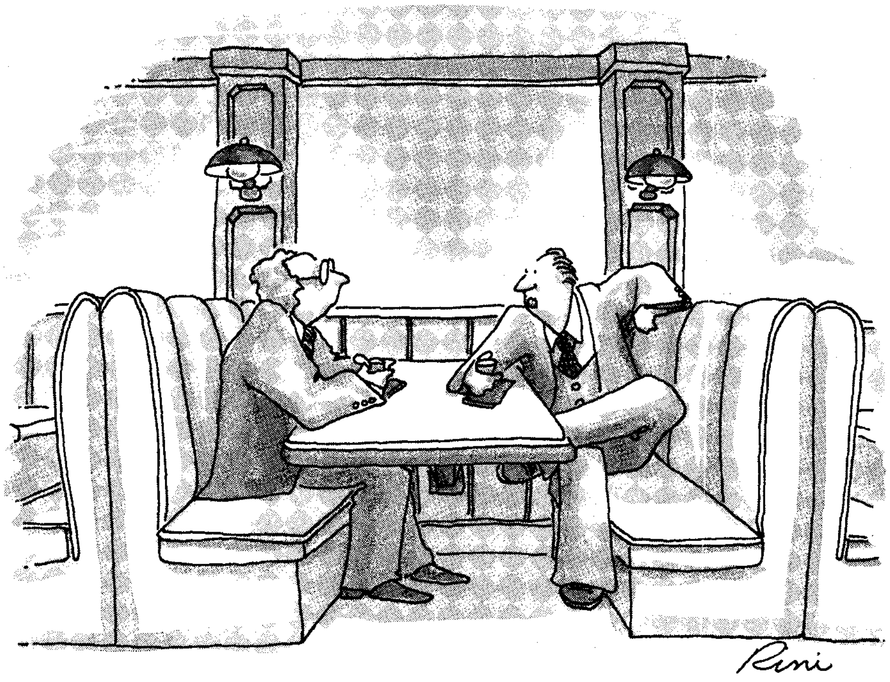
it's difficult to find a light, relaxed tone for contemporary romance when courtship rituals no longer exist to help set proper boundaries. The once playful bantering between men and women, the feeling-out process, has become coarse and passive-aggressive. The screenplay for "Up Close & Personal," by Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne, doesn't reconceive the romance genre or give it new juice; it's a piece of old flypaper. In the early scenes, Pfeiffer's Tally stumbles around on high heels, sausaged into outfits that are tight and tarty-looking; she spills the contents of her pocketbook on the floor, then scrambles around on all fours to retrieve the items, her butt wagging. When Tally suffers a spasm of stagefright before her weather-report début, Pfeiffer is again shown crouched on all fours, this time hugging the toilet as she vomits. Pfeiffer is too elegant and composed a screen presence to be ditzing around like Goldie Hawn. (Goldie Hawn herself has outgrown it.) Even the dialogue treats her like a bimbo. "Do you always wear that much makeup?" Justice asks after he hires her. (Her newsroom duties include making his coffee and picking up his dry cleaning.) Later, after he has visited her apartment to tell her she's been promoted, his parting shot at the door is "Thought I came by to fuck ya, didn't ya?" Suave.

Even though we know that Tally will eventually come into her own, it isn't enjoyable watching Justice patronize her. It's as if he were picking on a puppy. In a film filled with off moments, perhaps the most peculiar happens after a hot-shot agent named Bucky Terranova (Joe Mantegna, whose suits seem to wear him) flatters Tally by telling her, "Your voice is full of money." Warren later informs Tally that Terranova uses that line on everyone, and that it isn't even original—it comes out of a novel by Ernest Hemingway. She reacts with a blank look. Having established her illiteracy, he waits a beat before correcting himself and informing her that it wasn't Hemingway, actually, it was F. Scott Fitzgerald. "Sorry, bad joke," he apologizes. It's a bad joke, all right: nobody in the screening room laughed. It's also an in-joke, since Redford starred in the ill-fated film version of "The Great Gatsby," where it was Mia Farrow's Daisy Buchanan who possessed the voice full of money. These are echoes the filmmakers shouldn't embrace. For what was missing in "The Great Gatsby" is also what's missing in "Up Close & Personal"—a mutual sense of longing. When Pfeiffer looks at Redford, she seems to be thinking, Wow, what a guy. When Redford returns the look, he seems to be catching his reflection in her eyes and thinking, Wow, I'm quite a guy. On that they can agree.

According to the production notes, the premise for "Up Close & Personal" was suggested by the book "Golden Girl,"



"Marge and I passed a continuing resolution lasting at least until the kids are in college."

Alanna Nash's biography of the news anchor Jessica Savitch. An aggressive face in television news, Savitch shot from the local markets to network fame at NBC. Deep into cocaine and a long-term, mutually abusive relationship with a news director, she lost it on the air one night, stammering through a newsbreak sounding cotton-mouthed and looking unstrung. After that, Savitch's career swan-dived. She died in 1983, at the age of thirty-six: she and a male companion drowned after their car ran off a road and into a canal. Avnet has said that he wasn't interested in making a period piece about TV news or "a woman self-destructing on her way to the top"—understandable, given that the Jessica Savitch story has already been the subject of a Lifetime cable-TV movie and of a subsequent documentary.

But the filmmakers' decision to set the story in the present proves a mistake. Taking the Jessica Savitch "golden girl" out of the Farrah Fawcett seventies is like remaking "Saturday Night Fever" and removing the disco beat. The emergence of CNN and the crowd of other news and pseudo-news sources (from "Hard Copy" to Rush Limbaugh) has so dispersed media power that a satire like "Network" would be pointless today: the deranged anchorman Howard Beale couldn't command enough audience share to get the silent majority hollering out their windows. "Up Close & Personal," for all its inside airs, arrives on the scene too late to tell us anything about TV news that we haven't already seen in "Broadcast News" and on "Murphy Brown." Updating the material only makes it seem more dated.

Having decided to play down the Jessica Savitch angle, Didion and Dunne choose to revive the screenplay they wrote for the 1976 Barbra Streisand–Kris Kristofferson version of "A Star Is Born," which was a remake of the 1954 version, which, in turn, was a remake of the 1937 version—which makes this film a remake of a remake of a remake. Now instead of two rock stars it's two news pros who are the power couple on the teeter-totter. As Tally thrives, vaulting to the anchor desk of a Philadelphia station, Warren dips. Unlike "A Star Is Born," this reversal of fortune doesn't result in domestic psychodrama. Tally's success doesn't bring out any ugly or unexpected side of Warren: he doesn't lash out, take to drink or drugs, or attempt to undermine her. He quits his post in Miami to coach her in Philadelphia, and once she becomes a star he drifts downstream on his own job hunt, rebuffed in interview after interview because he's too old and outspoken in the new world of sound-bite journalism. He's a man among munchkins. Yet Redford doesn't vent the kind of steam Jack Nicholson employed against the yuppie usurpers in "Wolf." He keeps his thermostat cool, and he doesn't do anything that would violate his stoic code as an actor or wrinkle his front. Pfeiffer isn't given anything to do, either, though she looks beautiful not doing it. (She doesn't languish alone: two strong actresses, Kate Nelligan and Stockard Channing, are squandered in supporting roles.)

Because the screenplay fails to dramatize any friction or tantrums inside the marriage, it's forced to lob in trouble from the outside. There's a protracted, noisy sequence that features Tally trapped in a prison riot and broadcasting against a backdrop of smoke and tear gas and big mean bodies bashing one another. It's an action showpiece that seems way out of tune with the rest of the film, and is clearly a mark of desperation. (It does yield the film's one affecting moment, though: after Tally finishes her final news feed from the prison, her face begins to crumple.) Putting aside the flashy distractions in "Up Close & Personal," the movie is primarily the story of a two-career marriage whose partners are out of synch—hardly the stuff of tragedy, or even soap opera. There's nothing inevitable about their fate. They play it so loose that they could float apart at any moment. They're a non-couple.

Near the end of the film, Warren muses to Tally, "We had some fun, you and I, didn't we?" When was that? When the movie audience wasn't looking? His note of nostalgia is an implicit farewell. The screenwriters have enough shame not to send Warren walking off into the ocean, à la Norman Maine in "A Star Is Born." Instead, they dispatch him to Panama on a phony-baloney hush-hush investigation of possible terrorist activity. (Redford sounds sheepish explaining it.) This allows Warren to rediscover his idealism and journalistic pride before taking one for the team. The movie ends with the broadcast of a tribute to Warren Justice which shows Tally's head posed against a giant image of his good looks. Even in death, he looms over her, his nobility intact. In this movie, martyrdom is the ultimate narcissism. ♦

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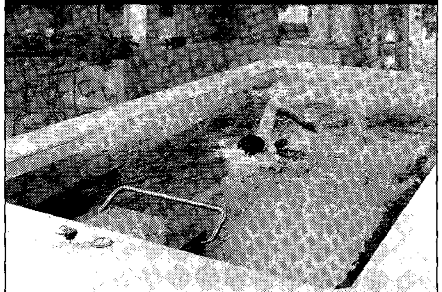

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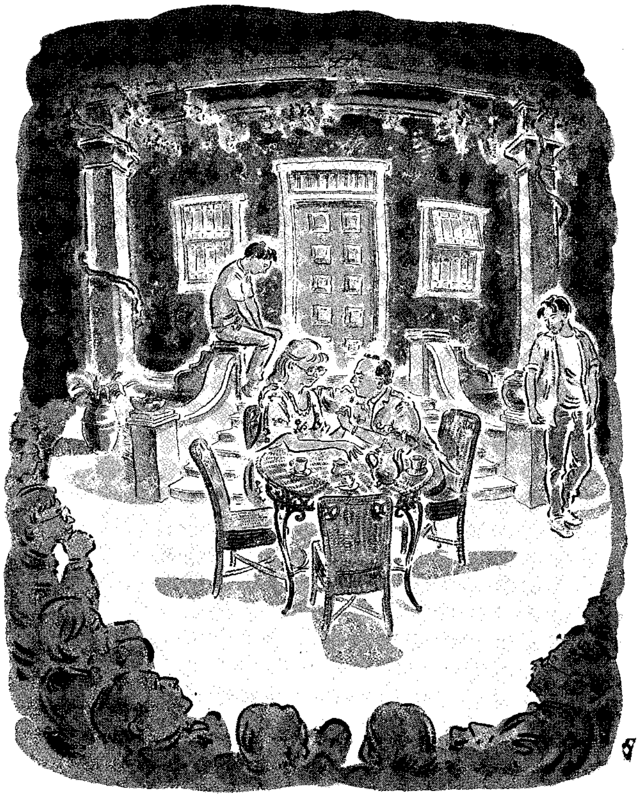
Jon Robin Baitz's latest, and a revival of "Bus Stop."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

JON ROBIN BAITZ'S new play, "A Fair Country," at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, takes its title from an Auden poem called "Refugee Blues," which would itself be an apt title for the play, since it's about lost states, both personal and political—places in the world and in the heart that cannot be regained. Baitz, a thirty-four-year-old American, spent six years of his youth in South Africa, where part of the action is set, so he's well qualified to see where and how private life and public life intersect and diverge. In this play, about the family of Harry Burgess (Laurence Luckinbill), an American cultural-affairs officer in Durban, the familial and the political are inextricably bound up; as in Baitz's previous work, moral choices and betrayal are at center stage.

The play, directed by Daniel Sullivan (who also directed Baitz's 1991 "The Substance of Fire"), opens in the late eighties, after the Burgess family has fallen apart. The mother, Patrice (Judith Ivey), has tracked down her son, Gil (Matt McGrath), in deepest Mexico, where he's working at an archeological dig. It's one of the most awkward scenes I've ever witnessed between a mother and a son, and it's hard to tell whether the problem is between Patrice and Gil or Ivey and McGrath. Mother and son haven't seen each other in six years, yet there's no emotional charge, positive or negative, between them. Gil's lines have the sardonic edge of cocktail-party banter: he says to his mother, "I used to warn all my boyfriends that I was on the rebound from you." We learn that Harry has died (there's no reaction from Gil when his mother tells him the news) and that there was another son in the family, who has also died. Patrice and Gil are all that's left; against a wall of tangled tropical vegetation, the two seem like pieces of wreckage left behind after a plane crash.



Before the crash: Matt McGrath, Judith Ivey, Laurence Luckinbill, and Dan Futterman in "A Fair Country."

PAUL COX

The action then jumps back to the late seventies, in Durban, and as the play proceeds to show us what went wrong—how the crash occurred—we are able to put the pieces together. Harry wants to get his family out of South Africa. Patrice won't adjust to the irrationality of life there; their older son, Alec (Dan Futterman), an angry anti-apartheid journalist in New York City, is a constant threat to the family's emotional stability. Harry gets the European posting he wants, but at a tremendous price. The family moves on to The Hague (and into a coldly modern Dutch apartment with a Mondrianesque red-white-and-blue color scheme—yet another triumph for Tony Walton, the set designer), and when Alec comes to visit we find out that all the black political activists he knew in South Africa are either dead or in jail. The only thing the activists had in common was the Burgess family (no accident, that surname): Harry had met all of them when they came to visit Alec at their house in Durban. It's clear that whatever Harry did to get his promotion and to try to keep his family together is what doomed the activists. Through all this, Gil, the designated family peacemaker, tries to understand what's tearing his family apart, and tries to get out from under the influence of his mother. The family dynamic is such that when Patrice is upset the one who goes to console her is Gil, not Harry. As Harry says to Alec about the bond between Gil and Patrice, "It's a closed club." Unable to digest or make sense of the present or the future, Gil retreats to the past, to archeology—a move that is, to put it mildly, unjustified by anything we've learned about this character.

Thematically, this play is a very neat package, but it rings hollow. (And one scene, in The Hague, is highly derivative of a scene in "Plenty"; maybe all unhappy wives of diplomats are alike.) Yes, you see the constant interplay of the public and private, but the play is overwhelmed by its structural apparatus and ends up falling between the two stools. The talk is intelligent but is oddly unmoored to life. The intelligence that Baitz showed in "The Substance of Fire" had a wrenching, personal component, but emotionally his new play seems to have all the substance of smoke.

IT'S fitting, I guess, that the revival of William Inge's 1955 play, "Bus Stop," now at Circle in the Square, begins and ends with the characters frozen on the stage in mid-movement. These characters don't really live; they're just wind-up toys from Inge's collection of "ordinary" people, who exist only for the purpose of mechanically displaying different aspects of loneliness. Set in a street-corner restaurant in a small town between Kansas City and Topeka during an early-March storm, the play throws together eight stock figures—or figurines—from the Midwestern Room of the Americana Museum: a warmhearted waitress of a certain age; a bus driver who wants to get under her apron; a Wilford Brimley-like sheriff; a poor girl from the Ozarks with big dreams, who's working as a "chanteuse" in Kansas City and calls herself Cherie; a bucking bronco named Bo who's fresh off the ranch; his older, wiser sidekick; a bright-eyed clean slate of a young girl who helps out at the restaurant; and a pathetically lecherous professor, your basic Shakespeare-spouting alcoholic-drifter-philosopher.

It's unlikely that Josephine R. Abady, who directed this production, used the freeze-frame technique in order to call attention to the false quality of Inge's play (Robert Brustein once called it "a vulgar folk vaudeville"), yet everything about the staging does exactly that: the period country songs that are played in the theatre before the show and during intermission, the all too perfect period costumes, the dingy-cozy lighting in the restaurant. "Bus Stop" does provide some chewy parts for actors—chiefly Bo and Cherie, who are played by Billy Crudup (he made an impressive Broadway début last year as the tutor in "Arcadia") and Mary-Louise Parker. Bo is a big, clueless hunk of hormones, and Crudup is a high-energy perpetual-motion machine here; though he's touching, in a little-boy sort of way, I didn't really care what happened to him. Parker's Cherie is a cartoon of bruised female romantic expectations. The most interesting and most watchable characters are the older waitress, played by Kelly Bishop, and Bo's sidekick, Virgil, played by Larry Pine. They both have a worn-out, disappointed look and sound to them, and they give their characters real grace and a real pulse.

But this play was cornball when it was new. Bo, the hick from Montana, says things like "I'd also like me some ham and eggs . . . and some potaty salad . . . and a piece a pie. I ain't so pertikler what *kinda* pie it is, so long as it's got that murang on top of it." (The spellings are those of that writer feller Inge.) In this hyper-authentic, faithful revival, the play has become caramelized corn. ◆

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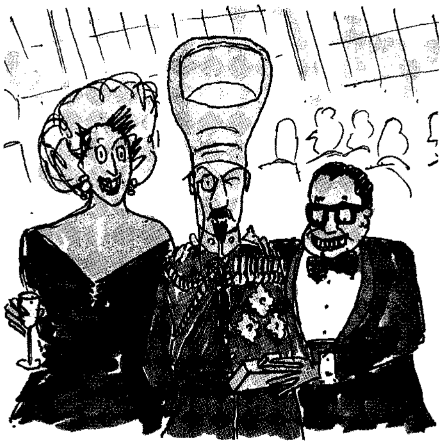

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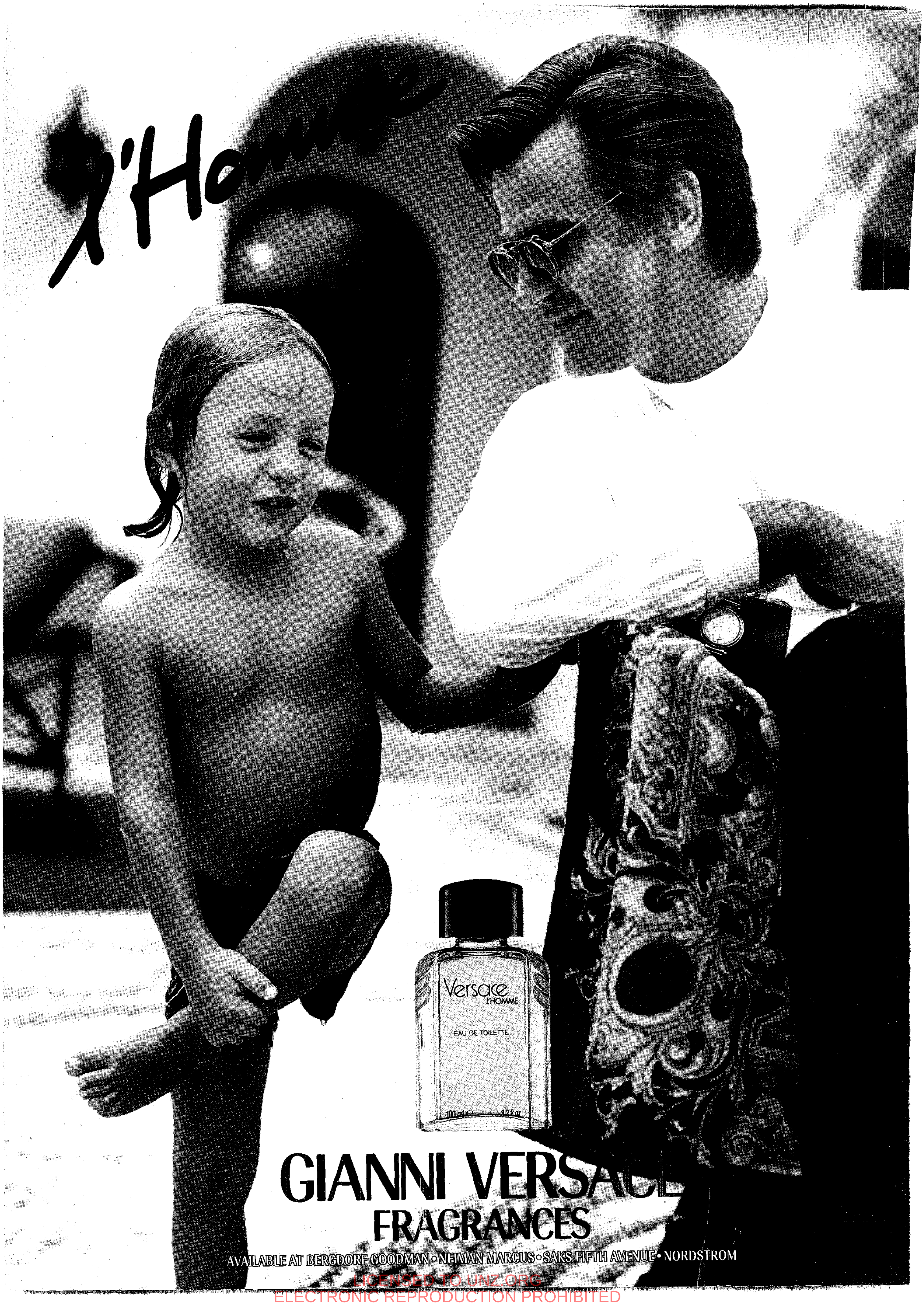
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